

CASSELL'S HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



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OPENING OF THE ROYAL EXCHANGE BY QUEEN VICTORIA (1844)

From the Painting by R. W. Macbeth, R.A., in the Royal Exchange.

Cassell's History of the British People

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VOLUME VI

From Waterloo to the Year 1914

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

VOLUME VI

INTRODUCTION :

COMMERCIAL EXPANSION AND THE PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION

GREAT BRITAIN entered the nineteenth century under the shadow of a war greater than that waged a century before against Louis XIV, but less exhausting than that which was to be waged a century later against Germany. She emerged victorious, supreme at sea, easily first in economic strength, absolutely strong in virtue of capital accumulations from foreign trade and of mechanical inventions at home, and relatively strong by reason of the youth of the United States and the economic prostration of the continent of Europe. But, having furnished the major portion of the finances, she had to bear the consequent burdens when peace came. As William Cobbett was never weary of showing, currency, debt and taxation hung like millstones around the country's neck. The restoration of the gold standard in 1819, while it removed the spectre of an inconvertible paper currency, made the burden of the national debt still heavier.

Successive interest reductions and the economies of Victorian financiers brought gradual relief; and after a false start in 1816, when the income tax was abolished in a fit of disgust, the scheme of taxation was

carefully adjusted to the capacity of the taxpayer by the courage of Peel and the ingenuity of Gladstone. With the removal of fiscal hindrances—tariffs and internal excise—trade increased and the revenue exhibited resilience. Free trade was thus gradually won. Pitt, the political child of the *Wealth of Nations*, had made the beginning, but the French wars thwarted him. Huskisson resumed the task; and it is to Huskisson, with his keen eye to the importance of the United States and his comprehensive grasp of the reaction of fiscal changes on the colonies, that we owe the biggest contributions to free trade. Peel followed on Huskisson's lines, reducing the tariff in the order in which he could appeal to manufacturers—first the duties on raw materials, then those on semi-finished articles, and finally those on finished articles.

Peel also succeeded in a field where Huskisson had failed, repealing the Corn Laws in 1846, and thereby giving a new orientation to party politics. Free trade, which three great Tories, Pitt, Huskisson and Peel, had promoted, was completed by Gladstone, the leader of the new Liberal party, himself a Tory in his early days. In this new party the

Whig aristocracy was joined by the middle-class Radicals, who thought as their masters, Cobden and Bright, had taught them to think in the stirring days of the Anti-Corn Law League. The spell of Gladstonian finance survived the political split over Home Rule; and it was very gradually indeed that the world of Liberalism came to understand the gap which lay between the economy of Mr. Gladstone, with his tender regard for income and saving, and the lavishness of a People's Budget, which takes toll of unearned income and offends the landowner at his most sensitive points. As Lady Bracknell remarks in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, "What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure."

Arrival of the Factory System

By comparison with the tumultuous age of Napoleon and the years of painful aftermath, the eighteenth century seemed in retrospect a golden age. For in the time of Walpole the nation was at peace, taxes were low, and England was a steady exporter of wheat to the Continent. There was some truth in this picture—far more indeed than in the similar halo which was thrown up around the social condition of the people in the century preceding the Industrial Revolution. For this revolution was a long-drawn transition. It has its origin in the commercial expansion which was supported by the foundation of the Bank of England in 1694. It was in progress throughout the eighteenth century, as London, specializing in finance, threw off its staple industries to the provinces, and as the merchant capitalists by their monopoly of financial control forced the small master craftsmen into the ranks of permanent wage-earners. By 1815 a new order had arisen in the spinning of textiles and in engineering. The merchant capitalist had become the owner of a cotton mill in which he installed machinery, often of his own making. He was at last a real employer. The factory system had arrived. The cotton industry, in which for more than a century Lancashire has led the rest of Britain, and

Britain the rest of the world, symbolizes the distinctive features of British industry. The raw material comes from the United States, once our dependent plantations; and happily no fiscal vagary has prompted them to lay a duty on its export. Our chief market is the East, in particular British India, the ancient home of textile handicraft and a competitor in the machine product of to-day. But Lancashire's pull is a strong one. For the connexion between the mill and the machine shop is very intimate, and her operatives possess the inherited skill of more than a century.

Evolution of the Steam Engine

In the several branches of engineering Britain was the first to tread new paths, but by the end of the nineteenth century other nations had drawn level in skill and surpassed her in volume of work. Having an abundance of coal, she was the first to employ it in the treatment of iron. Her civil engineers, handling iron as a material for bridge-building on roads and canals, experimented with an iron boat. Her mechanical engineers, using a steam engine to pump the water out of coal mines, and rails for the conveyance of coals from the pit-head to the river, evolved the rotary engine for the factory and the locomotive for the open railway.

But what Brindley and Stephenson did in the cramped area of Britain was soon outdone by American engineers on a wider field and amid greater freedom. The Great Lakes, the Prairie and the Rockies were inspirations the like of which the old-country inventors never knew. The latter got their chance in the machine shop and the steamship.

The steam engine was a more dramatic invention than the machine tool. But the machine tool made possible the standardization of processes and parts; and standardization is the keynote of modern industrial technique. Boulton was indispensable to Watt. Maudslay and Whitworth enabled British manufacturers to achieve all along the line what their eighteenth-century predecessors had achieved in patches. When parliament in 1841 was considering the propriety of throwing open the export of

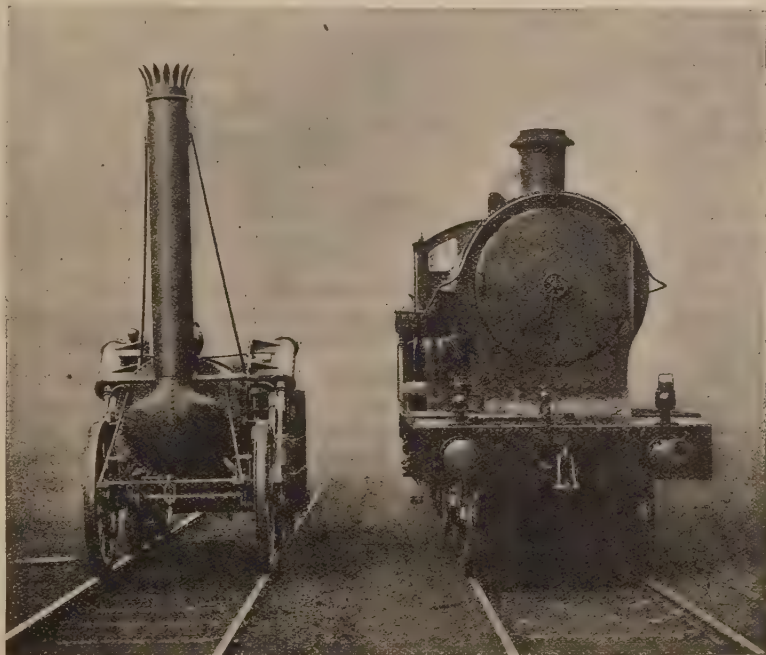
DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRON STEAMSHIP

machinery the witnesses before the committee were agreed that although the Continent could compete with us in the assembly and operation of looms and engines they could not compete in tool-making.

In shipping fortune favoured us. Few Englishmen of the day, outside Huskisson, saw how serious was the challenge of the American mercantile marine after 1815. In speed and seamanship American vessels, manned by native-born American sailors, were beating us on the high seas, creating records across the Atlantic and ousting our clumsy East Indiamen from their ancient preserves in the Orient. Then came the substitution of iron for wood—of iron, that Britain alone was smelting and rolling by new methods, for wood, which America had in abundance and Britain

hardly at all. The matchless clippers, the glory of the 'fifties, passed away before the steadier-going cheaper and more durable iron steamship. In 1838 Samuel Cunard, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, then a centre of wooden shipbuilding, founded a steamship service across the Atlantic. The ships were built at Glasgow. After a few years iron took the place of wood for the hull; later still the screw displaced the paddle; and in 1867 the service that was founded by a Canadian abandoned

Halifax in favour of New York. In 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was completed in the States, and in the same year the Suez Canal was opened. The exploitation of the West absorbed the energies and capital of America, bringing freight to British steamships and disaster to British wheat growers. The direct route to India gave the death-blow to the sailing ship; and through the acumen



By permission of the L.M. & S. Railway.

EVOLUTION OF THE RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

George Stephenson's "Rocket" (1829) and the five-thousandth engine built at Crewe. The highest speed of the former was twenty-nine miles an hour. The latter, with a far heavier train, moves more securely at twice that speed.

of Disraeli Britain became the senior partner in an enterprise which French brains had created and vested interests in Britain had consistently opposed.

The century which had opened with iron and the ingenious arts closed under the dominion of science and steel. When Sir Henry Bessemer turned from the invention of ordnance for the Crimean War to the mass conversion of pig-iron into steel by one direct process, he added the last of the

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distinctively nineteenth-century inventions. With oil and electricity we are on the threshold of the twentieth century, and guiding us across it is science, our mistress. If one nation is to be singled out as a pioneer in the union of science with industry, of laboratory research with business enterprise, that country is Germany. The war brought this home to Britain; and the answer of her scientists and business leaders was not unworthy.

What of the life that was being shaped amid the storm of war and the stress of economic transition? Where shall we look for it? How shall we measure it? In one field the task is only too easy. For in rural

England there was no life at all. It is said that Coke of Holkham saved England by the ploughshare when the sword would have availed nothing. So true was this that in the thirty years following the peace of 1815 England continued to furnish nearly

the whole food supply of her rapidly increasing population. But crops and fat cattle were produced at the expense of men. The nations of western Europe emerged from the

Napoleonic war with their land damaged and agriculture backward, but they had saved their peasant proprietary, which in the course of the nineteenth century was nurtured by legislation and co-operative



by permission of the Cunard Steamship Company.

MODEL OF THE P.S. BRITANNIA, 2,050 TONS

The first Cunard liner to cross the Atlantic. She left Liverpool for Boston, July 4, 1840, and made her port in 14½ days.



WHITE STAR LINER, R.M.S. OLYMPIC, 46,359 TONS

The giant liner at the beginning of the twentieth century marked the enormous development of commerce and shipbuilding in the second half of the nineteenth.

INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS IN THE TOWNS

organization into strong and self-sustaining life. Britain lost her peasant stock during the inrush of industrialism and the fever of food production in war time. It is true that the village community with its unproductive open field farming was growing threadbare long before the war-time enclosures, but it is at least possible that if the final break-up had occurred in a time of peace the State would have done something to retain the nucleus of a peasant proprietary. As it was, the landlords, being efficient agriculturists, were allowed their own way; and when the war ended the prevailing philosophy of *laissez faire* saw no further than the encouragement of allotments. A new poor-law or transportation to Van Diemen's Land was deemed a better medicine for agrarian discontent.

We must therefore look for life in the towns and industrial regions; and here our measurement of it will differ according to the industry we are considering. To the skilled mechanics, of whose life we hear very little—perhaps because they had little of which to complain—the mechanical changes brought new openings and better pay. In industries where steam-power came quickly, or where from the nature of the operations it was incidental, there was exploitation and hardship, but little starvation and no descent from a better standard.

Factory children were worked to death; miners, navvies, dockers and seamen lived a low life, probably eating and certainly drinking more than their ancestors. But at any rate their work was done in an expanding field. Children in time were pro-



THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND
(The Hungry 'Forties.)

By permission of the proprietors of "Punch," from the Cartoon by John Leech—Vol. I, No. 1, July, 1841.

tected by factory acts; wages in time were raised by combination, secretly up to 1824 and openly thereafter; and the industries were strong enough to stand the cost.

In other fields, where steam-power had not arrived and was looming only in the distance, hand-workers who had once been craftsmen and leaders in local life maintained

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for fifty long years (1800-50) a desperate fight against their own numbers reinforced by inflows from Ireland, against the antiquated instruments of production which they sometimes owned and sometimes hired, against the crazy system of indirect employment which made regulation of the ultimate employer impossible and tied the worker in numbing chains to the ever cheapening products he sweated himself to



ROBERT OWEN

From an Engraving after the Painting by W. H. Brooke.

produce. Such was the tragedy of the nailer, the hand-loom weaver, the framework knitter. Families in the hungry 'forties worked day and night for a weekly wage of 12s. 6d., which they were lucky to take home in cash. After 1850 the situation eased, partly as the result of cheaper food-stuffs, partly as the result of the dying out of the generation, but mainly because of the evolution of a stronger industrial fabric, based on those very things, steam power and factory life, which were so repulsive to the champions of "domestic industry."

Nevertheless, by 1850 life of another and finer sort was coming to birth. A great man had lived and made a fortune in cotton-spinning, done and said many eccentric things and atoned for all by enthusing his generation with elemental ideas of association. For this

was the great lack of the age. Individualism had some good things to its credit. It had stirred the desire for enlightenment and made war on legal abuses, but by 1830 it had spent itself and was standing in the way of better things. Robert Owen, almost alone in his age, grasped the meaning of social responsibility and pointed the way of salvation—self-help through voluntary association. Owen was the father of Co-operation and Socialism. He added to the already planted desire for individual improvement the enthusiasm to unite for mutual improvement. He led, too, for a short time the militant trades unionism of the 'thirties, not altogether approving it and yet unable to deny himself the satisfaction of leading it. Most of Owen's ventures were short-lived, but his spirit lived on and infected others after him, rousing them to associate now for this, now for that social or economic purpose. This spirit was manifest in the associations formed for the removal of specific abuses—the Short Time Committees and the Anti-Corn Law League. It was manifest too in the more purely working class endeavours which issued in the Co-operative Movement, the new Trade Unionism and the great working-class orders of Friendly Societies.

If 1848 saw the last of Chartism as a fighting force—its political substance was conceded with hardly a struggle in the years that followed—1844 saw the establishment of the Rochdale Pioneers and 1850 that of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. The subsequent growth of the co-operative store movement into something which, among the British working classes, is not unfittingly called a Commonwealth of Consumers, is only equalled by the achievement of the trade unions in establishing and protecting the standard of life by the threefold path of legal enactment, mutual insurance and collective bargaining.

As the nineteenth century draws to a close the industrial atmosphere changes. For after a time, and in an industrial society after a short time, the new itself becomes old. International competition and falling prices brought a prolonged depression in the 'eighties, and a new voice was heard in the world of labour. The under-dog began to

SPIRIT OF MODERN SOCIALISM

growl; and a new unionism—this time unionism among the unskilled workers—issued out of the strike of the London Dockers in 1889. Karl Marx preached to willing ears the forgotten doctrines of the early English Socialists, and the Fabian Society framed a constitutional programme of municipal and state collectivism which

landlords and employers against “the lower orders,” of the working classes and their leaders against capitalists and capitalism. But as a nation the British are apt to be self-centred, both in their age and their country. With a great history behind them, they are singularly averse to reading their past. It needed the shock of the World War



A SATIRE ON BROUGHAM'S PROPOSALS FOR LEGAL REFORM
From "Political Satires," May 16, 1829 (1868-2-8-8984), in the British Museum.

was congenial to the piecemeal instincts of British policy. Voluntary arbitration and conciliation—the triumph of the 'seventies and 'eighties—continued to be practised, but the device had lost its glamour and a more relentless spirit was growing up, to show itself in the twentieth century in a brief dalliance with the alien gospel of Syndicalism and then to rally around itself the ablest school of advanced thought, the Guild Socialists.

As individuals the British can hardly be reproached with over-contentment. The decades abound in mutual recrimination, of the middle class against the landlords, of

to shake our national complacency. That the nineteenth century might be an exceptional episode in the history of Great Britain as one among many nations in the world was scarcely even formulated as a possibility. British traders traded as though all nations would or ought to trade as they did. British labour assumed that British capital could always afford the margin of encroachment which the trade unions had wrung from Victorian employers. And, of course, London must always remain the centre of world finance.

A national confidence is a valuable corrective to an excess of individual grumbling,

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but it has its dangers, especially in quarters where indifference may for a long time stop short of bringing disaster. Think only of the tragic story of Ireland, of the forced Union of 1800, of the inarticulate revenge of Irish pauperism on the labour market of England and Scotland, and finally of the last fifty years with its religious hatreds and political misunderstandings, with its concessions delayed until the virtue had gone out of them, and the imminent danger of a supremely desirable economic rebirth—agricultural co-operation—being wrecked by civil war. Think, too, but to a very different conclusion, of the relations between Great Britain and her self-governing dominions. The issue has been very good. Lord Durham saved Canada to British allegiance, even though some of his remedies—the absorption of French-speaking Canada and the imperial reservation of

trade policy and of public lands—were altogether wrong.

Much is forgiven to those who offer something in a reasonable and understanding spirit. The reproach to nineteenth-century Britain is rather that in yielding political and economic autonomy she failed to set before herself as a goal the settlement within the Empire of her best, and that she participated in the emigration of all too many samples of her worst. Capital and trade, it may be, can best take care of themselves, flowing where economic opportunity offers. But the transfer of labour, the interchange of knowledge, and the synthesis of nation and empire in the commonwealth of British nations are tasks which demand from the present generation something more than individual effort as well as something less than an imperial bureaucracy.



LONDON BRIDGE AND THE POOL, A.D. 1811

From a water-colour Drawing by G. Arnauld in the Crace Collection (vii, 32, 42), in the British Museum.



CORN MARKET, OBELISK, AND ST. LAWRENCE'S 'CHURCH,' READING (1823)
From a Colour-Print by W. H. Timms, in Reading Art Gallery. By permission of the Art Committee.

CHAPTER I

BRITAIN IN THE YEAR OF WATERLOO

THERE is a sharp contrast between the Britain of to-day and the Britain of a hundred years ago. Roughly, it is the contrast between the town and the village ; between the factory and the farm ; between drab streets, thronged with noisy traffic, and the serene freshness of quiet country lanes. Napoleon's taunt against the English was that they were a nation of shopkeepers. Yet the men who fought against him came of a race bred for the most part in the country, to interests bound up with the land and with the cultivation of it, to rural habits and to rural ways of thought.

Compared with other nations, the British, it is true, were already a manufacturing people. It is also true that, save in a year of exceptional harvests, the time had passed

when the country could grow corn enough to feed her people, and that her population had of late increased so rapidly that even a keen observer like William Cobbett found the figures too astounding for belief.

But we must beware of exaggerating the triumphs of the industrial revolution, or of anticipating their effects. In 1815 the new methods of manufacture were still in their infancy ; the extensive adoption of the power-loom, for example, scarcely began until some years after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars. The landed interest was still well able to care for itself, and the British corn-grower was still master in the home market. Foreign wheat and flour were imported, but the average imports were, in proportion to the population, extremely

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small; they declined in the second decade of the century and did not show any permanent increase before the 'thirties. Until then, though the population of the country grew, the British farmer was able to keep pace with its growth, and to obtain, in the profitable business of feeding it, a share so important that it amounted almost to a monopoly.

Increase of Population

Although the population of England and Wales had recently increased at a remarkable rate, the most astonishing increase was yet to come. Within about fifty years of Waterloo the population doubled itself, and it trebled itself within a century. In 1815 the increase had not yet changed the essentially rural character of the country. On no reasonable basis of computation could more than a third of the population yet be described as town-dwellers. What is true of England and Wales is, in the main, true also of Scotland. Ireland's interests were even more emphatically bound up with the land, and the great industrial development of its north-eastern counties lay in the still distant future.

At the beginning of our period there were not in England more than six towns at the most—in addition to London—which could be reckoned as large. England was a land of small and placid villages and of the little market-towns, "solid and clean," that Cobbett described so well and so often. A description of the old town of Reading, as it was in the 'twenties, "with its still, quaint-looking streets, its ruined abbey and friary, its memories of mediæval congresses and Roundhead sieges," helps to conjure up a vision of this vanished England. "It is a very quiet place," writes one who in later life set down his childish memories of it. "The mail-coaches travelling on the Bath road at the marvellous rate of twelve miles an hour change horses at the Crown and the Bear . . . The watchman calls the hour of the night. From the tower of old St. Lawrence's Church the curfew is tolled. My nurse lights the fire with a tinder-box. Over at Caversham"—a village a mile away—"a man is sitting in the stocks."

Not far from Reading, at about the same date, Mary Russell Mitford was writing her pleasant, if somewhat rose-coloured, descriptions of *Our Village*. It is a compact and self-dependent community which she describes, a community doubtful of novelties like "a monthly diligence or a fortnightly fly" which relate it to the great world outside. It is profoundly conservative. Even rising rents and falling prices it finds less objectionable than the steward who refuses to grant a lease unless the farmer will promise to spread chalk-manure upon his fields. But the prosperity of the land is the intimate concern of everyone. The small yeoman still survives. Even the baker, the wheelwright and the shoemaker keep an Alderney apiece.*

Changes in Village Life

Jane Austen's villages, still earlier in date, are painted from the point of view of the squirearchy and are apt to be shadowy appendages to the hall or the park. None the less, her descriptions only deepen the impression of the isolated and almost self-contained character of English village life.

The villages of Lancashire and Yorkshire, nurseries of our infant manufactures, had already lost something of the patriarchal atmosphere which still rested upon the villages of the south. But that they still preserved part of their rural charm, although no longer unspotted by industrialism, is clear from such descriptions as that given of Middleton, in Lancashire, by Samuel Bamford in his autobiography called *Early Days*. As in Lancashire, so in Yorkshire. Bradford was still, for instance, a "miniature country town"; and the Barnsley district was then renowned as much for the quality and quantity of its corn as it now is for its woollens or its coal. References to the Potteries give the same impression as those to Lancashire and the West Riding; scenes of rural tranquillity were still to be found in the heart of the Five Towns. In the midlands and the north, therefore, the industrial revolution, though it was making itself felt,

* These sketches of rural life were written at intervals between 1819 and 1832, but obviously they contain recollections of earlier years.

THE RURAL COMMUNITY

had not yet disfigured the countryside or changed in any of its main features the structure of country life. Even there England was still a land of villages.

These tiny rural communities were in some measure self-governing. The unit of local government was the parish, which in rural areas corresponded, sufficiently for the purpose of a general description, to the village and its immediate neighbourhood. Most of the rural villages were small. Perhaps two-thirds of the parishes of England had, in 1815, a population of less than three hundred souls; they were composed, that is to say, of little groups of not more than fifty or sixty families.

The natural leader of such a group was the rector or the vicar. Where he resided amongst his flock, and was not a pluralist devoting his attention to another parish or to no parish at all, he was a living member of the rural community, its temporal head as well as its spiritual director.

Principal Parish Officers

Parishioners were chosen annually to fill the four principal parish offices. The churchwardens were chosen at the Easter vestry, the annual parliament of the parish. Usually they were not difficult to find, for their office was one of prominence and dignity, which brought honour and consideration to its occupants without involving them in too much labour. The remaining offices of the parish no man coveted. Appointed by county justices, and in the long run responsible to county justices, the occupants had duties to perform which seldom make a man popular with his neighbours.

The surveyor of highways had to see that the occupiers of the land kept their hedges and ditches in order; he had to get them, if he could, to perform their annual tale of six days' service in repairing and maintaining the roads; and, finally, he had to levy the highway rate. The overseer of the poor had to care for the indigent and levy the poor-rate, an onerous and disagreeable duty which in some districts was made all the more difficult by the heavy sums which the luckless overseer was compelled to exact from his neighbours. Samuel Crompton, the inventor,

appears on one occasion to have removed from one parish to another merely to avoid serving in this hated office. Still more hated and avoided was the office of constable. In general it was executed by deputy or fell to an inferior member of the community. Miss Mitford explains that in her *Village* this "high officer" of the "little state" was a drunken blacksmith, generally to be found in the thick of the brawls which it was his duty to suppress.

All these offices were unpaid, and usually fell in turn to each of the eligible parishioners according to some system of rotation, which varied with local custom. Subject to a few exemptions, service was compulsory; any parishioner who refused office was compelled either to appoint a deputy, and, of course, to pay him, or to pay a fine to the parish funds. Because the offices were burdens rather than honours they were exceptions to two usual rules of that day—their holders were required neither to have a property qualification nor to satisfy a religious test. For the same reasons, in spite of the prejudices of the age, a woman was occasionally appointed, and it is on record that Mrs. Crompton, mother of the inventor, had to serve her term as overseer.

Clerk and Beadle

In addition to these unpaid officers, changing from year to year, the parish was served by a varying number of inferior but more permanent officials. Chief amongst these were the parish clerk and the vestry clerk,* while the most picturesque and most imposing was the parish beadle.

The maternal grandfather of George Jacob Holyoake was beadle of St. Martin's, Birmingham, and Holyoake tells us in his reminiscences, dating back probably to the early 'twenties, of his childish wonder at his "grandfather's fine long blue coat, red collar, brass buttons, and his tall japanned staff with gilt nails."†

The vestry was nominally the parish assembly. It passed the churchwardens' accounts; it decided on the church rate;

* The parish clerk might be vestry clerk as well, and frequently was so, but the offices were distinct.

† *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, i, 8.

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LORD LYNDHURST AS PARISH BEADLE, 1829

From "Parish Characters" (1868-8-8-9016), in the British Museum.

and it made by-laws for the parish. In theory a meeting of the parishioners at large, the working vestry of many rural parishes was a small group of the more substantial householders who had in turn to bear the burden of public office. The parson, the squire's bailiff, three or four farmers, the miller, the innkeeper, a small freeholder or two, and, in prosperous villages of some size, perhaps two or three gentlemen of independent means—these constituted the effective vestry. Once a year, at Easter, they met in formal assembly. During the rest of the year the parish business was transacted by the administrative officers, or agreed upon by the rulers of the village during a chat at the alehouse, or perhaps again, as apparently in Jane Austen's superior parishes, settled at the hall in conversation after dinner.

Such a system was marred by obvious flaws. Important administrative work might fall into incompetent hands, especially in the smaller parishes, where the educated in-

habitants were few. It is, for instance, on record that an overseer, unable to keep accounts, kept instead a pair of old boots, putting the rates into one of them, and the receipts for his expenditure into the other.

The mother-wit of illiterate office-bearers may, in a like manner, have saved other parishes from financial confusion. But a wide outlook in large matters of policy could not be expected and was rarely to be found. Want of knowledge, want of experience and want of intelligence led to the extravagant administration of a chaotic poor-law, and to the costly parsimony of neglected highways. And yet, with all its weaknesses, the government of rural parishes had two great merits: a widespread freedom from corruption, and the strength which is derived from established and accepted custom.

The link between the government of the parish and the wider government of the county was the local squire, not so much in the capacity of squire as in virtue of the fact



ARCHBISHOP HOWLEY AS CHURCHWARDEN, 1829

From "Parish Characters" (1868-8-8-9015), in the British Museum.

COURT OF QUARTER SESSIONS

that he was usually a justice of the peace. Fair treatment has seldom been given to him. He has been described as a bull-baiter, a cock-fighter and a game-preserve, a dueller and a hard drinker, a corn-grower and a selfish protectionist, whose conceptions of pleasure and duty were summed up by Byron in a single line, "To hunt and vote and raise the price of corn." But the description is neither fair nor complete. That there were many excellent squires, intelligent in their outlook and diligent in their duties, is clear from the portraits contained in Jane Austen's wonderful gallery of country gentlemen. The good squire was the counsellor and guide of the parish. As justice of the peace it was his duty, along with his neighbouring justices, to supervise much of its business. Two justices appointed the constable, the surveyor and the overseers. A justice examined and passed their accounts. It was the justices who saw that the alehouse was kept orderly, and that the overseer

was neither plagued with vagrants nor neglectful of genuine distress.



FASHIONS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

A lady in morning dress, 1819.

From "Repository of Arts," Vol. VIII.

These justices met together at regular intervals in the court of quarter sessions, not merely to try the graver offences, with which they were not authorized to deal when sitting singly or in pairs on the local bench of their own neighbourhood, but also to act as an administrative authority, ruling over, and even legislating for, the whole of the county. In this work they were assisted by a modest hierarchy of professional or semi-professional servants—the clerk of the peace, the surveyor and the treasurer, variously remunerated by fees, salaries and perquisites. For each of the ancient intermediate divisions of the county called hundreds there was, besides, a high



FASHIONS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Left: a lady in walking dress, 1819. Right: a lady in walking dress, pelisse, 1822.

From "Repository of Arts," Vol. VIII.

1893

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constable, once honorary, now paid by fees, who was the link between the county justices and the parish constables. Aided by these officers, the justices carried out most extensive and varied duties. They ordered a new assessment here and a road to be repaired there; they controlled the county police and managed the county jail; they undertook the building of a new bridge or of a new county hall; they directed that a flooded watercourse should be cleared out; they permitted the diversion of a footpath or they determined a right of way. By the beginning of the nineteenth century these county courts of quarter sessions were passing, indeed, in the more progressive counties, through a process of evolution which enabled them to prepare the way for, and to some extent to anticipate, the modern county councils, later to inherit nearly all their administrative powers.

The county justices made many mistakes and sometimes they blundered badly; they were often selfish and foolish, even cruel; but much of their work was wholly admirable. It was the voluntary service of unpaid amateurs, for the most part squires and parsons, learning their work by doing it, and falling into the errors natural to men who were faithful in business but whose sedulous practice was illuminated by few broad conceptions of general policy. To the best of them their fortunate counties owe a debt that has been little acknowledged for services that, with all their faults and shortcomings, can scarcely be over-praised.

Population of London

Paradoxical as it may seem, nothing so clearly demonstrates the significance of the villages, and of their organization at this period, as an examination of the towns. The latter were remarkably few in number and not very great in size. London, "the monstrous Wen," as Cobbett called it, was then, as always, exceptional, and had alone attained the proportions of a great modern city. Its population in 1815 was probably about a million and a quarter—more than a tenth of the whole population of England and Wales.

Next, if we follow the census of 1811, came

Manchester and Salford, with 115,000 inhabitants, and Liverpool with 104,000. The expansion of these towns had been recent and rapid. Bristol, with a population of 71,000, belonged to the historic cities of England. But the three remaining towns of the first rank—Birmingham (82,000), Leeds (62,000), and Sheffield (53,000)—point to the future rather than to the past, for—along with Manchester—they were the capitals of the new industrial England which was just then springing into being.

To the observers of those days their growth was marvellous and even alarming, but these half-dozen aggregations of crowded life bulk very small against the hundred and two large towns and urban districts which, excluding London, were revealed by the census returns of a century later. The urban population of 1811 was very small and stands out sharply against the wide background of the normal village life.

Size of Lesser Towns

An examination of the lesser towns does not change the impression. In the second class of urban areas may be reckoned fifteen towns with a population of over twenty but less than fifty thousand. Most of them were small, for only five of the fifteen had more than 35,000 inhabitants. Seven of the fifteen were ports, the expected monuments of England's commercial wealth and mercantile activity. Of the others, Norwich was a provincial capital of historic importance, once the fourth city in England, but now outstripped in the race of precedence by younger rivals in the industrial districts; and Bath was a city of fashionable amusement, a national place of public entertainment. The remaining six, taken with Leeds and Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield which have already been noticed, are an interesting guide to the industrial map. Oldham and Bolton were pioneers amongst the Lancashire "cotton" towns. Nottingham and Leicester, both towns with long histories, had entered upon a new stage of development as the centres of lace-making and of the hosiery trade. Wolverhampton was in the heart of the future "black country"; while Stoke-on-Trent was the kernel of the "potteries."

EXPERIMENTS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

But the gaps are almost more remarkable. Except for the still modest coal-ports of Newcastle and Sunderland, there was little sign of the coming development of the coal- and iron-fields of north-eastern England. Wales had, in the strictest sense, no towns at all. Merthyr with a population of less than 15,000, and Swansea with just under 12,000, were little more than growing villages. Other industrial districts, such as the Cleveland iron-field, as yet gave only small signs of the great and rapid developments that they were to undergo in the succeeding century. A survey of the urban population of England in the early nineteenth century serves, therefore, only to sharpen the impression of a predominantly rural society with a corresponding economic organization. Yet it was a rural society already touched, here and there, by the finger of change, in such a fashion as to mark out some of the main lines of coming developments, and to indicate the industrial future of some districts which were one day to become the busiest centres of national activity.

The government of the towns was more varied and more complex, and is less easy to describe, at once accurately and in general terms, than the government of the rural districts. In the town as in the country, the parish was everywhere an important organ of local government, but whilst it remained, in outline, much as it was in the villages, its practical working had gradually to be adapted to urban conditions, often novel and frequently changing.

Urban Parish Government

In the villages, where everyone knew everybody else, the ratepayers did not feel the need for systematized control of neighbours who were discharging duties of parish government to which they were themselves well accustomed. In the less stagnant life of the towns it was not always possible to rely upon such simple arrangements of mutual trust; nor was it easy to devise really satisfactory methods for transforming parish government to suit new circumstances in those urban areas where the rapid growth of population had rendered the existing machinery inadequate, or where the district had been

flooded with new-comers to whom its customs and its traditions were unfamiliar. In the early part of the century, therefore, urban parishes formed a vast laboratory in which almost every conceivable constitutional experiment was somewhere attempted.*

These experiments were sometimes deliberate, but more often they were only a half-conscious groping after a practicable means of escape from immediate and pressing difficulties. Occasionally they were a noxious growth of which the ratepayers at large were scarcely aware until the abuse was firmly rooted. But from oligarchic management to cumbrous attempts at control by the inhabitants at large in numerously attended and unruly public meetings, which recall the assemblies of the city states of ancient Greece; from the rule of a political "boss," such as the remarkable "Boss of Bethnal Green,"† to unfettered administration by a staff of paid officials—almost every known variety of political device was somewhere given its trial.

The Liverpool Vestry

The best, and in the long run the most fruitful, of these devices was the form of parish government adopted, after many experiments, in the parish of Liverpool, where the ratepayers at large, in annual vestry assembled, determined a few at most of the more important questions of policy, but elected a representative committee to which they delegated the control of the parish officers and the superintendence of detailed business.‡

Here and there, in the more populous districts, was to be found a confused tangle of specialized authorities, improvement commissioners, paving commissioners, courts of sewers, each created to meet a local need. Sometimes they were the most effective administrative bodies in the districts over which their authority extended, but they

* See *Municipal Origins*, by Dr. F. H. Spencer. A careful account of the attempts to discover, and to establish by private acts of parliament, such new administrative machinery as would satisfy the changing needs of the time.

† See S. and B. Webb, *English Local Government: The Parish and the County*, pp. 79–90.

‡ *Liverpool Vestry Minutes*, ed. by Professor Lym Blux and Mr. H. Petre.

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were in the nature of local accidents, and formed a part of no general system of local government. Birmingham, for example, owed what effective government it could boast to a statutory body of street commissioners. Here and there, too, the surviving machinery of the old manorial courts still preserved sufficient vitality and adaptability to grapple in a restricted though moderately efficient manner with the problems of a growing urban district. In Manchester, for example, the administration of the court leet had long been, and still was, efficient within its particular range. But its range was much too narrow. Manorial organization, however cleverly adapted, was little more than a makeshift and was inadequate to the needs of a great and growing town.

Mayor and Corporation

The characteristic form of town government was that of the boroughs. There, authority was vested in a council consisting most commonly of a dozen aldermen and a dozen councillors, presided over by a mayor. Of these corporations there were about two hundred, differing greatly from each other in their powers, in the details of their organization, and in the area and population which they controlled. The mayor was usually a man of power, for he was a magistrate as well as an influential administrator. He had a legal assistant or recorder. Each borough had its chamberlain, treasurer or cofferer, whichever he might be called; each had a town clerk, responsible for the administrative routine, and becoming by 1815—in fact if not in name—the most powerful official of the corporation; and, in normal cases, each had its own independent justices of the peace, though the range of their powers and the extent to which they were independent of the justices of the county varied greatly from place to place. The customs or constitutional habits of the boroughs divided them naturally into two classes, according as they were “close” or “open.”

“The great majority . . . were governed each by a Close Body”—composed of the aldermen and councillors—“which itself

selected the Head of the Corporation and filled vacancies in its own ranks by simple co-option.” In other words, the governing body was recruited from a narrow circle of the relatives and friends of the aldermen and councillors who were already in office, and the close borough formed a snug little oligarchy or family party.*

The “Open” Borough

In the more democratic “open” borough, the freemen, who shared its rights and privileges, had retained a measure of control over the governing body, which they asserted in different ways in different places; sometimes by some form of election; sometimes, as in the open vestry, by themselves exercising some “or all of the powers of government” in their own assembly.

Of both kinds there were good and bad. Liverpool was governed by its close corporation at least as well as any borough that could boast a democratic constitution, whilst in Leicester the members of the close body shamelessly diverted the corporation property to their private uses. Some of the municipal democracies were honest and efficient. There were others—unfortunately the greater number—where municipal money was spent to buy electoral support, or offices were distributed to reward political services. The chief flaws in the municipal organization of England were want of system, want of elasticity, want of central supervision and control. Much more serious than the misgovernment of petty towns and insignificant villages was the fact that great towns like Manchester and Birmingham were destitute of any real municipal organization at all, and that without parliamentary interference no effective machinery could be created for providing them with a form of government suited to their needs.

Although there was no effective control of local government by any central authority it must not be supposed that local and central government were not closely inter-related. Indeed, the structure of society in the counties, and the organization of municipal government in the towns, largely

* See Maitland's valuable studies in *Township and Borough*.

BOROUGH CONSTITUENCIES

determined the form and character of the parliamentary system, which was in many respects a faithful reflection of the somnolent society of counties dominated by the landed gentry and of stagnant municipalities controlled by small bodies of freemen or yet smaller bodies of aldermen and councillors.

The boroughs had a political as well as an

on the other hand, did not return members. None the less, the boroughs exercised an enormous and disproportionate influence in the political life of the nation at large. The electoral customs of the two hundred parliamentary boroughs were so various as to defy accurate description in general terms. Their one uniform characteristic was that,



THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION, 1808: HUSTINGS IN COVENT GARDEN

From the Aquatint by Bluck, from the Drawing by Pugin and Rowlandson, in the Crace Collection (xviii, 100), in the British Museum.

administrative side to their activities. They elected a large majority of the members of the House of Commons. Indeed, more than two-fifths of the representatives of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales sat for English borough constituencies. Of these parliamentary boroughs there were two hundred and three, but, though they were almost the same in number as the municipal corporations, the two classes were not absolutely identical. Members were elected by places which had never been municipal boroughs. A number of undoubted municipal boroughs,

great or small, they each returned two members to parliament.*

Broadly, they fell into four groups.† In

* There were seven exceptions. The twin boroughs of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis together returned four members; the City of London returned four members; and there were five single-member constituencies.

† There was a wide variety of minor differences within each group, and the precise number of boroughs which should be assigned to each has been variously estimated by different authorities. The reader who desires to examine an alternative description should consult the able statement of M. Halévy, *Histoire du Peuple Anglais au XIX^{me} Siècle*, i, 121-40.

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one—the group in which prevailed the widest of the existing franchises—it was comparatively easy for any adult male, who was not a pauper, to acquire a vote, easier in some cases than it subsequently became under the Reform Act of 1832.

Varieties of Borough Franchise

Of the various kinds of borough in this group the most numerous—scot and lot boroughs—were those in which the elector was required to qualify himself by six months' residence and by paying church and poor-rate. In others—potwalloper boroughs—the qualification was that the elector should have within his sole control the doorway to his dwelling, and that he should provide his own sustenance—a franchise which provided a test whereby paupers might be excluded from the electorate, but which was probably a survival from times when the requisite qualification was a rough-and-ready proof that the elector was his own man and lived in no dependence upon a lord. In some boroughs, again, the vote belonged to every freeholder; in others, to everyone possessing a freehold worth 40s. a year; whilst at Preston the franchise was vested in every adult male who had been an inhabitant householder for six months prior to an election.

It might be thought that franchises such as these would have rejoiced the hearts of those parliamentary reformers who looked forward to a millennium ushered in by universal suffrage. But although the group just described contained probably the most respectable and satisfactory borough constituencies in England, including a number of towns of considerable size and importance, it also contained some insignificant villages. The constituencies ranged in size from the rotten borough of Gatton, that "very rascally spot of earth," as Cobbett called it, with its half-dozen houses, to the populous City of Westminster, with a numerous and respectable electorate.

Now, in the smaller constituencies the handful of electors was easily bribed, or the poor-rates of prospective supporters might readily be paid by an eager candidate. Actual representation might thus pass from the hands of the poor or venal electors into

the control of a rich or influential "patron." When the electorate was larger, the bribing of individuals had to be replaced by some more wholesale form of corruption. But even in Westminster, probably the most independent constituency in England, candidates usually found it necessary to win the electorate by lavish hospitality.

The Westminster Elections

One striking instance may be quoted from the history of Westminster elections. In 1806, on the death of Fox, who had long represented the constituency, the Whigs put forward as their candidate the youthful heir of the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Percy. Bread, cheese and beer were distributed freely from the steps of the duke's house, and the duke's servants, "in their showy dress liveries," were also to be seen "throwing lumps of bread and cheese among the dense crowd of vagabonds they had collected together." "To see these vagabonds," wrote a contemporary, "catching the lumps, shouting, swearing fighting and blackguarding in every possible way, women as well as men . . . ; to see those people, representing, as it was said, the electors of Westminster, was certainly the lowest possible step of degradation, except, indeed, if it be possible, to hear it said, as it was said, that 'the electors of Westminster had been treated by the bounty of the duke.' Some who mingled in the mob were ashamed of the proceedings, and, as the mob pressed round the butts which contained the beer, suggested that the best way would be to knock in the heads as they stood up on end. This was done immediately. The heads were beaten in, and the coal-heavers ladled the beer out with their long-tailed, broad-brimmed hats; but the mob pressing on, the butts were upset, and the beer flowed along the gutters, from whence some made efforts to obtain it."* Some of the more respectable electors of Westminster felt the disgrace of this disgusting orgy and shortly afterwards made a determined effort to improve electoral conditions in the constituency. But as late as 1818, when Romilly, an ardent reformer,

* British Museum. Add. MSS. 27, 850 (19, 20), quoted by Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, pp. 42-3.

PURCHASE OF CONSTITUENCIES

was the candidate of the Whigs, his supporters felt compelled to woo the electors with the offer of free breakfasts.

Burgage and Corporation Boroughs

In the second group of constituencies the right to vote went with the possession of certain holdings of land called burgages. Apart from the electoral privileges attached to the possession of them, the burgages were often of an entirely fictitious value or importance. At Downton, in Wiltshire, one of the burgages was in the middle of a water-course. At Droitwich, usually reckoned in this class, the qualification to vote was a share in a dried-up salt-pit, which had long since ceased to have any commercial value. Most of the burgage boroughs had very small electorates which fell easily under the control of some peer or political magnate, as for example at Downton, where Lord Radnor owned ninety-nine out of the hundred burgages. It will suffice to give one instance of the despotic sway which the "patrons," as they were called, were able to exercise in the smaller burgage boroughs. At Knaresborough in Yorkshire there were no resident electors. The patron of the borough, the Duke of Devonshire, was an unfettered autocrat in the constituency. On election day forty of the duke's tenants or servants rode into the borough, received the burgage deeds from the duke's attorney, elected the duke's nominee, returned the deeds to the attorney, and rode home again.

It was even reported to be the practice at one period to "chair" a pauper as the proxy of the chosen candidate.

In the third group of towns, the corporation boroughs, the elections were controlled by the close corporation. The members of the corporation were self-elected; possibly they did not even live in the borough; but they alone chose the members of parliament. In the rare cases in which these towns were justly entitled to two representatives in parliament, there could be no possible pretence that it was just for the close corporation to enjoy the monopoly of choosing them. Most of these towns, as a matter of fact, were very small, and their corporations useless, or almost useless, as organs of local govern-

ment; they had been degraded into mere machines for returning members to parliament, and for sharing the profits of that privilege amongst the corporation. A few of them practically came to an end in 1832, after they were disfranchised by the Reform Act, since nobody had any further interest in keeping up the fiction of their municipal usefulness when they had ceased to be either politically or financially a source of profit.

Freeman Boroughs

It might reasonably have been expected that the fourth group of boroughs, in which the right of election was vested in the freemen at large, should have proved more satisfactory constituencies. But the attractions of this franchise dwindle as its working is examined. The freeman boroughs, as a class, were easily bribed and easily manipulated. This was due partly to the fact that, whilst many of the male inhabitants of the town might not be freemen, many freemen of the borough did not live in it. In some cases the freedom of the borough was a lucrative privilege, jealously guarded by the few who possessed it; in other cases the votes of the inhabitant freemen might be swamped by the vote of non-residents, upon whom the honorary freedom of the borough had been conferred by the dominant party in the corporation in order to secure an electoral triumph. More than half of the electors had sometimes obtained their votes in this way. Venality was an almost universal characteristic of boroughs of this class. They differed from each other mainly with respect to the manner in which it was most convenient to buy them. Where the electors were few, and the members of the corporation could exercise pressure on behalf of their patrons, the electors could often be managed in an inn parlour. Where the voters were more numerous the money of the candidates had perforce to flow freely in bribery and treating.

The boroughs of Lancashire afford examples of both types of freeman borough—the small and manageable as well as the large and venal. Clitheroe, with 1,300 or 1,400 inhabitants, had about ninety nominal electors, whose purity and independence may be gauged

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from the fact that two peers, Viscount Curzon and Lord Brownlow, were described by a contemporary as the "proprietors." Wigan, a fairly large town for those days, had a population of close upon 11,000 and was probably well entitled to return one member. But its two members were, in fact, elected by about a hundred freemen, chosen by the

may be judged from the fact that when John Gladstone, father of the future prime minister, was returned for the constituency in 1818, the election cost him £12,000. Liverpool, with a larger electorate, though by no means one proportionate to its great and rapidly growing population, was a still heavier drain on the purses of those who sought to represent it.



WESTMINSTER ELECTION, 1818: THE HUSTINGS AT COVENT GARDEN

The names of the six candidates are on the board attached to the central pole.

From the Engraving by J. R. Cruikshank, in the Crace Collection (xviii, 101), in the British Museum.

mayor and two bailiffs, who seem to have had the borough under good control, for it gave no trouble to its proprietors until 1831 when its Tory representation was interrupted in the stress of the agitation for the great Reform Bill.

Clitheroe and Wigan serve as examples of the manageable borough. Liverpool and Lancaster represent the venal type. Lancaster had a population of about 9,000, of whom 5,000 were householders and only 1,800 freemen. The character of the latter

The election of 1830, when 2,060 freemen voted, is believed to have cost the candidates no less than £80,000 or £100,000.

The representation of the English counties was simpler and purer than that of the towns. In the counties there was only one important franchise. Every freehold of the value of 40s. a year entitled its owner to a vote. Of its kind this qualification was neither unfair nor restricted. The average value of such a freehold was probably about £60 or £70. The franchise was not, therefore, difficult to

COST AND MANAGEMENT OF ELECTIONS

acquire, and it produced, on the whole, a good class of electors. Its principal defect was that it excluded the copyholders, an important class, whose tenure differed in little but form from that of the freeholders. Each county returned two members, which was unjust to large counties like Lancashire, but generous to small ones like Rutland.* There was no register of voters, and the county town was the only polling place. Despite a praiseworthy freedom from corruption, the elections were, therefore, difficult to conduct and expensive to the candidates, since much money had to be spent in bringing voters long distances to the poll, and in housing and feeding them until their votes could be recorded. Lambton's election for the county of Durham in 1820 cost him £30,000. Early in the century three elections in Middlesex cost a single candidate £100,000; and in 1827 it was stated in the House of Commons that as much as £120,000 had been lavished upon a single contest in Yorkshire. The great landowners, moreover, were generally able to exercise a preponderating influence in county politics. In Lancashire, for instance, the Whig Earls of Derby could count upon being able to return a member of their family without a contest. The defects of the county constituencies were counterbalanced by great merits; they could boast a degree of independence and a freedom from corruption foreign to the boroughs, and, impressed by this, the earlier reformers had proposed to increase their representation. It is certain that the eighty county members exercised an influence out of proportion to their numerical strength and enjoyed an authority which borough representatives could not command.

Wales and Scotland

In Wales, political life was, on the whole, less corrupt than in England. The people, as yet, took little interest in political questions, and were content to see the representation controlled by the great proprietors. It would have mattered little if it had been otherwise, for the handful of Welsh members were lost among the representatives of the English boroughs.

* Yorkshire, an exception after 1821, returned four.

In Scotland the conditions were different and their outcome was surprising. For Scotland had an intellectual life of its own. In thought, in literature, even in political speculation, it showed both independence and originality. It might have been expected to show a similar independence in political action, but the case was far otherwise. Scotland, it was said, was like a village at a great man's gate. Most of its forty-five members were at the beck and call of the Dundas family. The precise methods, therefore, by which the 2,400 electors of the Scottish counties or the 1,200 electors of the Scottish burghs chose their parliamentary representatives matter very little; the Dundases, father and son, were masters of the electorate, and for thirty years had managed it, first in the interests of Pitt and then in the interests of the Tory party.

Nomination Boroughs

Scottish constituencies and English boroughs were thus alike in being easily managed; and in dozens, if not in hundreds, of the "nomination boroughs," as they were called, the ownership was as little questioned as that of any other marketable commodity. Seats in parliament, literally, were bought and sold. The shameful traffic was notorious and almost unconcealed. Seats were advertised for sale, in the newspapers, like cattle or patent medicines. Cobbett averred in 1807 that he had counted fifty-seven such advertisements. "The practice of trafficking in seats," said an apologist in the House of Commons in 1809, had "become as glaring as the noonday sun."

Two well authenticated instances may be cited, since they show better than any generalizations how the traffic in seats was carried on. Towards the close of his career, Lord Derby, then a Conservative prime minister, described how he had first entered parliament as a young Whig for the rotten borough of Stockbridge. The description shows very well how the traffic in seats was carried on. In 1821 "it so happened that a West Indian proprietor, of high Tory principles, found himself . . . in pecuniary difficulties. He was the possessor of property, however, which included a borough.

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over which, although nominally there was voting of scot and lot, he had absolute and entire control. It happened also that a wealthy Whig peer was desirous of increasing his political influence, and he requested me—then a young man, and without the slightest connexion with the borough in question or with its neighbourhood—to accept the seat which was to be placed at my disposal. And so far was the complaisance of the Tory proprietor of the borough carried, that he not only vacated his seat in the middle of the session, but also went down in person, and introduced to the constituency, whom he had sold, the nominee of the Whig peer to whom he had sold them.”

Rather different, though not less illuminating, was Palmerston's experience when he first entered parliament for the tiny borough of Newport, in the Isle of Wight. The patron, Sir Leonard Holmes, was a man who looked after his property. “One condition required,” says Palmerston, “was that I would never, even for the election, set foot in the place. So jealous was the

patron lest any attempt should be made to get a new interest in the borough.” By a curious turn of events, the boroughs of the Isle of Wight were inherited as part of the Holmes estate by a young lady, who was still a minor in 1831 when a heated general election was being fought on the question of reform. The lady's guardian, who deemed discretion the better part of valour, sold the seats at a high price to the Whigs, who bought them in order to return members prepared to vote for the disfranchisement of the boroughs for which they sat.

On the other hand, patronage had, no doubt, its good side. It gave young men their chance, and it gave it to them much earlier than they have usually obtained it under the more honest and more equitable systems of later times. Members of the great political families nursed the seats at their disposal on behalf of young relations. Alert patrons sought for intelligent young men who were likely to make a mark in the political world. Hopeful and opulent fathers purchased seats in parliament for promising

sons. Capable men were thus enabled to begin their careers in the full tide of youthful enthusiasm. They passed through the dull routine of their political apprenticeship whilst they still had a zest for the work and found nothing irksome in its drudgery. Thus had Fox become member for Midhurst before he was of age: thus had Lord Lonsdale brought in Pitt for Appleby: and thus did Peel and Macaulay and Lord John Russell and Gladstone make their entry into political life almost as soon as they crossed the threshold of manhood.



GENERAL DISTRESS AFTER WATERLOO

John Bull, crushed by taxes, especially the tax on manufactures, cannot reach the loaf; at the same time the landowners dance with joy at the repeal of the property tax.

From a Caricature by G. Cruikshank, published 1815, in the British Museum



SEAL OF GEORGE IV (obv, 1824)

This, the only seal, displays, on the obverse, figures of Justice, Mercy and Wisdom; Britannia, Caledonia and Hibernia.

CHAPTER II

MEN AND MOVEMENTS, 1815-22

WHEN the British people drew breath after their titanic struggle with Napoleon, they turned with relief from continental politics, which they hated, to the consideration of their own domestic interests.

They were confronted by unfamiliar problems of bewildering complexity, problems which their governors were unfitted to solve and which the people themselves imperfectly understood. A new industrial Britain was arising. It arose more gradually than has been sometimes supposed. Yet, at each stage of its progress, this industrial revolution disturbed the balance of employment and threw men out of work. In the long run, no doubt, the machines which ousted the skilled hand-workers from their occupations, or rendered them comparatively unprofitable, brought material benefits to society at large. But no man sees his livelihood disappear without bitterness, or endures present starvation without complaint in order that unborn generations may prosper.

War had increased production to an enormous degree. Both agriculture and manufacture had been stimulated by demands arising from the conditions of war, which better farming and an astonishing series of scientific and mechanical discoveries had enabled them to meet.

During the war Britain had enjoyed many advantages: freedom from invasion, a relatively small loss of man power, a long start in the new methods of industry, and a maritime commerce which, despite great risks, yielded enormous profits. She was able, therefore, to repair some, though by no means all, of the wastage of her capital whilst it was being expended, and so to conceal the fact that, like her continental rivals and allies—if to a lesser degree—she really was living on past savings, depleting the national capital and piling up debt.

Peace brought this artificial inflation to a sudden end. On its conclusion the demands which the war had imposed on the manufacturer and farmer ceased abruptly; our own government and the countries which

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it had subsidized no longer showed themselves as lavish customers of the British producer. Manufacturers, who had speculated upon the opening of extensive foreign markets, found that demands fell far short of their anticipations, because continental customers had little to spend, and because the war-ridden countries were, for the first time in over a quarter of a century, able to produce unhindered for themselves.

Industrial Depression

The cost of war had to be met by heavy taxation, which fell with crushing effect upon the producers faced by a sudden restriction of demand. Bankruptcies followed one another in rapid succession. The failures of their customers caused an epidemic of failures amongst the country banks, then very numerous and for the most part small; and these stoppages led, in their turn, to more bankruptcies and the failure of yet more banks. Instead of the expected plenty, peace had brought want and ruin.

The greatest sufferers were the labourer and the artisan. During the agrarian revolution the small landowner had almost disappeared, his place being taken by the great landowners, tenant farmers and farm-labourers. The labourers lived, in the best of times, at or near the margin of subsistence. When it ceased to be profitable to cultivate the poorer lands which had been tilled during the war, many wage-paid labourers fell out of employment and were thrown on the parish. Poor-rates mounted, and tenant farmers, finding the burden insupportable, gave up their tenancies at the first opportunity. The result was that still more labourers swelled the ranks of the unemployed.

In the manufacturing districts the period would probably have been painful and uneasy in any case. The transition from the old system of industry to the new had reached an awkward stage. Some of the artisans were too old or too slow to adapt themselves to new methods; and women and children, since they could be employed on the new machines and were cheaper than men, displaced male labour and brought down the rates at which men were employed. Pauper children were unloaded in droves upon the

northern manufacturers by thrifty London parishes. By dozens they ran away from the misery of the factories; dozens more were simply lost to sight without leaving trace or record. The new towns and villages and streets grew up haphazard, without care for sanitation or proper building. Into these mean, unlovely and hastily constructed rabbit-warrens a mass of half-starved humanity was crowded, not merely without consideration for the amenities of life but without regard to public health. No provision was made for education; there were no healthy amusements.

To the industrial poor, who dragged out stunted lives in these conditions, the depression of trade was an added curse. It accelerated the fall in wages, it increased unemployment. And there was no one to care. Large-scale industry widened the gap between master and man, and tended to break the human bonds between them which in happier times might have assured the assistance and sympathy of the employer towards his suffering workmen.

But the large-scale employer was still the exception. Most of the new masters were small men who were the architects of their own fortunes, and apt to be harsh towards the failures of the class from which they had risen. Besides, these small masters had troubles of their own; they, too, were feeling the strain of bad times; and in their battle for personal security, during a period of tottering credit, they often rode roughshod over the defenceless workman. Hence their sinister reputation.

High Prices and Low Wages

For destitution and unemployment no sovereign remedy has yet been discovered. Statesmen are still baffled by it, and nobody has yet devised a means of relieving poverty without creating it. A chaotic poor-law, designed to be humane, was worked in so confused and irrational a fashion that it increased the misery which it was planned to cure. It was equally serious that, while wages were low, prices were high. Over a long period, and if there are no counter-vailing conditions, wages, though they lag behind, follow prices. In many industries,

FLUCTUATIONS IN THE PRICE OF BREAD

however, in the early part of the nineteenth century, machinery and cheap unskilled labour were actually bringing wages down at a time when the price of necessaries, and especially of bread, was abnormally high. And the cost of bread oscillated so rapidly that the wages of the labourer were never

sought to guarantee to the farmer a fair price for his corn. But the remedy they proposed was a bad remedy. By the Corn Bill of 1815 the import of wheat was only permitted if its average price on four stated days of the year had reached 80s. a quarter in the previous six weeks. For this bill the



CORONATION OF GEORGE IV
Ceremony of the Recognition.

From the water-colour Drawing by C. A. Pugin (figures by James Stephanoff), in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

adjusted to the prices which ruled in periods of scarcity.

There is reason to think that the fluctuations in the price of bread had as much to do with the miseries of the time as the high level of its average price; and these fluctuations were the one aspect of the economic situation with which the government, faithful to the agrarian interests, attempted to grapple. More than half of the wealth of England still came from the land. In the circumstances, the government felt compelled to deal with the problem of untenanted farms and untilled fields; and they

Whigs, despite some individual protests, must bear responsibility with the Tories. It aggravated the miseries of the poor, and led to riots both in London and the provinces. The frantic efforts of ministers to assure themselves that the riots were due to anything but the Corn Bill are revealed in the Home Office papers, and would be comic if they were not a heart-breaking revelation of the blindness of Sidmouth and his colleagues.

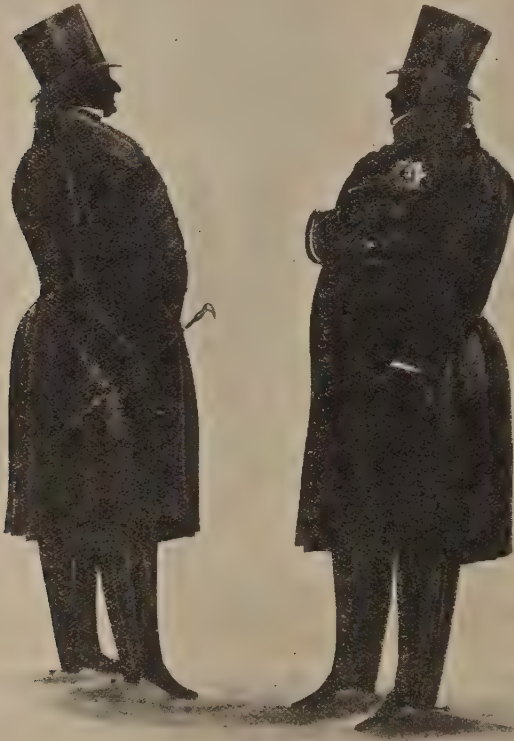
The men at the helm of public affairs were unfit to grapple with the social and economic problems of the time. They neither realized the extent and pressure of the distress nor

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possessed the training, the sympathy and the vision needed to shape public policy that would ease the burdens of the people. The king, a pathetic figure in his blind, insane old age, extorted a pity and a respect which helped to save the monarchy in stormy times. This insurance was needed, for the

On his accession to the throne in 1820, George, who was unhappily married to a foolish princess, Caroline of Brunswick, tried to obtain a divorce. The princess had been indiscreet to the verge of madness; probably she had been no worse. It was common knowledge, on the other hand, that her husband had been a great deal worse, and the divorce proceedings divided the nation into two passion-ridden factions.

The Whigs made party capital of the queen's case in a fashion not less disgraceful than that in which ministers lent themselves to the king's plans for a divorce. Both parties failed. If ministers were compelled to withdraw the Bill of Pains and Penalties by which they had attempted to accomplish the king's purpose, the Whigs were unable to restore Caroline to her rightful place as a wife and a queen. A prolonged and sordid wrangle reached its culmination when the queen was refused admission to Westminster Abbey on the day of her husband's coronation. Monarchy was sullied and the self-respect of the nation lowered by this unseemly scandal. Nor did it seem likely that the besmirched monarchy would soon recover its prestige.

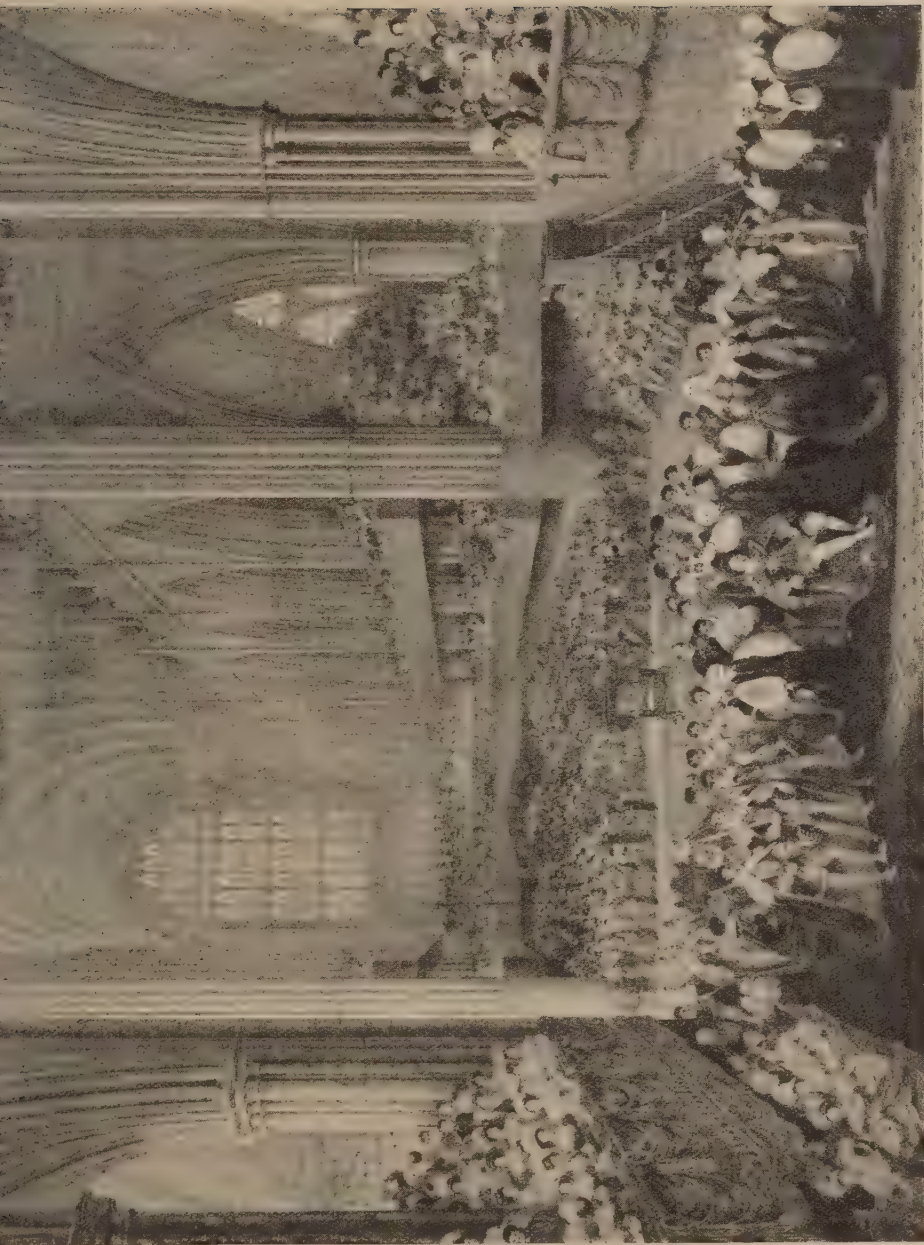


GEORGE IV AND THE DUKE OF YORK

From the Silhouette in the National Portrait Gallery.

king's eldest son, George, Prince of Wales, who had assumed the regency in February, 1811, brought upon the royal family nothing but shame and contempt. Indolent, selfish and extravagant—he cost more, as Thackeray says, than a manufacturing town—he was a hindrance in politics and no help in administration; whilst even the “capricious good nature” which Greville allows him was employed only to gratify a whim or to support a prejudice.

Princess Charlotte, the gay and impulsive child of George and Caroline, had died in 1817, a year after her marriage to Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. The princess had been popular and her death caused genuine grief. Moreover, it left the succession doubtful. She was an only child; and her uncles were middle-aged and unpopular. It was not till the birth of the Duke of Kent's daughter Victoria in May, 1819, that there was even a dim prospect of a dignified and popular



CORONATION OF GEORGE IV IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, JULY 19, 1821

The Archbishop of Canterbury placing the crown on the king's head.

From the water-colour Drawing by C. A. Pugin (figures by James Stephanooff), in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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succession. The credit of the monarchy can hardly have been lower in the worst of reigns than it was during the regency and reign of George IV.

Politicians were in no better credit than the court. Parties were confused, divided, and without consistent policy. The Earl of Liverpool, who was at the head of the minis-

trance to all change ; for opposition to parliamentary reform or Catholic emancipation ; for political repression ; and for indifference to the social dangers of the time. Its leading spokesman was the lord chancellor, John Scott, Lord Eldon (1751-1838), son of a Newcastle coal-dealer and a self-made man. Eldon was a vigorous,



PROCLAMATION OF GEORGE IV AS KING, AT THE ROYAL EXCHANGE, JANUARY 31, 1820

From the water-colour Drawing, attributed to Charles Wild, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

try, had considerable administrative experience, but no definite purpose and no width of vision. He had held together the Tory party since the assassination of Perceval, in spite of the disruptive forces which threatened it from within, but almost every variety of opinion that could be called Tory was represented in the ministry. Roughly, it fell into two sections.

The first, which may be regarded as inheriting from the king's friends and high Tories of the previous generation, stood for

fighting politician, as rapid and decided in his political judgments as he was slow and hesitating on the bench. With him may be counted the timorous Lord Sidmouth (Henry Addington), a good "committee-man," whose opinions were little better than prejudices, and whose administration of domestic affairs was responsible for much of the unrest of the time. Vansittart, the ingenious but incompetent chancellor of the exchequer, belonged to the same group.

Contemporaries believed that Viscount

CASTLEREAGH AND CANNING

Castlereagh, the leader of the House of Commons, belonged to the same reactionary group. In the light of recent research that view must be rejected. Castlereagh has been wronged because much of his best work was diplomatic and was done, of necessity, behind the scenes, because he was unfortunate in the political company he was forced to keep, and because he consented to postpone measures which he thought necessary and to carry others which he probably disliked. His name is linked with the corruption by which the Irish Union had been carried, with an odious policy of repression at home, and with equally odious alliances abroad. Yet Castlereagh, like Pitt, had begun as a Whig, and, also like Pitt, had been a reformer and an advocate of Catholic emancipation.

Lord Holland, a political opponent and a strong, but fair-minded, party man, believed that Castlereagh never lost sight of those objects; whilst as for his foreign policy—this was never understood by his contemporaries, and he was denounced as the betrayer of the very causes for which he had struggled with all his strength. Wellington himself had not worked more strenuously to secure Britain's victory in the war against Napoleon nor done more to ensure success.

A section of the Tory party, which contemporaries—not entirely without justification—deemed to be more liberal, was led by George Canning, a glittering wit, and a glowing orator who claimed to be the political heir of Pitt. Canning had attempted in 1812 to raise "the flag of a new party inside the entrenchments of Eldonian Toryism." On this account, and because of a reputation for shallowness and instability, he was distrusted even by men who sat with him in the same cabinet. "Providence," wrote Sydney Smith in *Peter Plymley's Letters*, made Canning "a light, jesting, paragraph-

writing man, and that he will remain to his dying day." Tories echoed the Whig judgment, and Canning, who was out of office during the last critical years of the Napoleonic war, did not return to the cabinet until June, 1816.

His return to office marked some weakening in the opposition to Catholic emancipa-



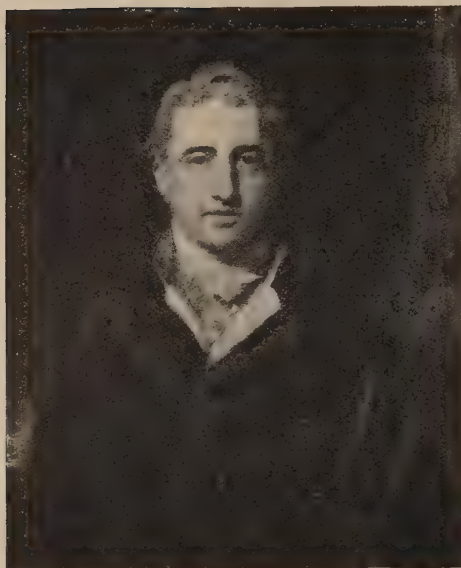
AMELIA ELIZABETH CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK, QUEEN
CONSORT OF GEORGE IV

From the Painting by James Lonsdale, in the National Portrait Gallery.

tion, but it marked no change in domestic policy. Canning was a bitter opponent of parliamentary reform and an advocate of political repression; whilst if he had any clear perception of the economic and industrial problems of his day, he proposed no solutions of them. Even in foreign policy he showed less originality than has been sometimes supposed. Among his followers, however, were men who understood the nation's economic necessities or who were willing to learn from those who did.

"Prosperity" Robinson, the weak and

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ROBERT STEWART, VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH,
SECOND MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY

From the Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, in the National Portrait Gallery.

amiable vice-president of the board of trade, afterwards its president, and later the chancellor of the exchequer, does not perhaps count for much. He was "the man" who, according to Gladstone, "knew least about finance who was ever at the head of the treasury." But he was fortunate in his advisers, Thomas Wallace and Huskisson. The latter succeeded him at the board of trade in 1823, and was probably the ablest of the Canningites.

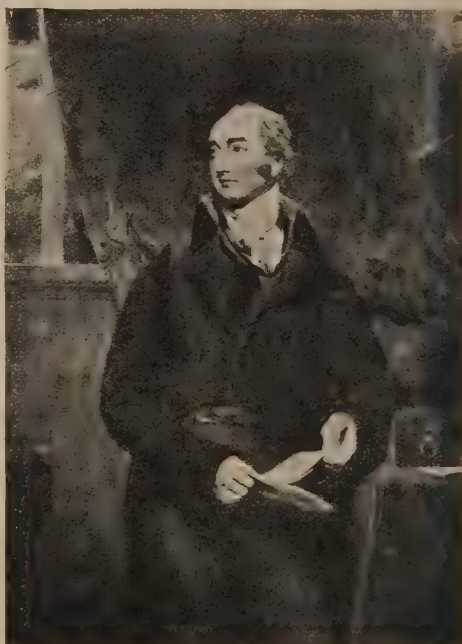
If the Tories were disunited, so also were the Whigs. As a body, they did not differ greatly from their opponents, except in being out of office, and they based their political system even more rigidly than the Tories upon the landed aristocracy. Thomas William Coke of Holkham (1752-1842), their great party manager—"King Tom," as he was called—was a typical representative of the landed magnates, an agricultural reformer, but a man incapable of appreciating the industrial and commercial needs of a changing England. The Corn Bill of 1815 was supported by Whigs as well as by Tories. Whig borough-mongers were numerous and powerful; and Whig rotten boroughs were as great a scandal as Tory rotten boroughs.

Some leaders of the party were, it is true, convinced reformers. But Lord Holland tells us, not without complacency, that reform was still an open question in the party. To be a Whig, it was not necessary to be a reformer; nor were the Whigs always the friends of progress. Lord Darlington, the great Whig borough-owner, opposed the Stockton and Darlington railway because it interfered with the game preserves.

The left wing of the party was loud in its demands for economy and retrenchment. But when a "retrenching committee" under the Grey administration reduced by £200 a year the salary of the comfortable sinecure which had been given to one of the most strenuous of these economists, he could not contain his rage. Thomas Moore, himself a Whig, described the Whig zeal for economy aptly and with point in the well-known couplet:

"As bees on flowers alighting cease their hum,
So, settling upon places, Whigs grow dumb."

The Whigs, like the Tories, were divided



GEORGE CANNING

From the Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, in the National Portrait Gallery.

WEAKNESS OF THE WHIG PARTY

into two factions. One section was led by Lord Grenville, long the henchman of the younger Pitt, an able diplomatist and a good official. In 1804 he had refused to return to office with Pitt unless Fox were included in the cabinet, and thereafter he had acted with the Whigs. After Fox's death in 1806 he had led the Ministry of All the Talents. But in 1815 Grenville—then fifty-six years of age—was resentful of new ideas, and in domestic politics he shared the alarmist opinions of the ministry. His support of the repressive home policy of the government in 1817 and 1819 led to an irreparable breach with the more liberal section of his party, a breach which virtually put an end to Grenville's political career. Yet on some subjects he was more enlightened than the reforming Whigs. At any rate, he could shake himself free from agrarian interests, and in 1815 he offered a strenuous opposition to the mischievous Corn Bill in which many orthodox Whigs could see no fault.

The main phalanx of the Whigs was led by Charles, Earl Grey, a great Northumbrian landowner, of spotless integrity and firm purpose. His views on economic questions were not always sound, but he had consistently refused to purchase office by surrendering the cause of Catholic emancipation; and from his first entry into politics he had made the reform of parliament the ambition of his life. Unhappily for the Whigs, Grey was not popular even with his own party. He was too austere, too inaccessible; and his hatred of London and society, and his passion for retirement, amounted, in a public man, almost to a disease. Only the most urgent calls could draw him to the consultations of his party.

In the House of Commons the weakness of the Whig party was even more manifest than in the Lords, where Grey had often to fight unsupported. In the Commons, which, even in the early years of the nineteenth century, was the arena of decisive party warfare, the Whigs were almost leaderless. The veteran Sheridan died in 1816. Grattan, who had outlived his once commanding influence, died

in 1820. Sir Samuel Romilly, the noble advocate of great causes, who might have become an effective leader, was overwhelmed in 1818 by domestic calamity and took his own life. Thereafter Grey's followers were unable to agree upon any leader of outstanding ability. "There is," wrote one of them, "no superior mind amongst us."

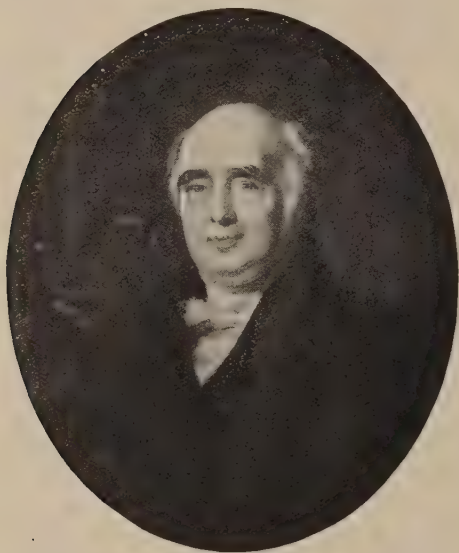


THOMAS WILLIAM COKE OF HOLKHAM
From the Painting by Gainsborough, in the possession of the Earl of Leicester.

For a time the party was led in the Commons by the amiable but ineffective George Ponsonby; and then by George Tierney, a wealthy politician of third-rate ability and none too consistent conduct. The ablest spokesman of the group was Henry Brougham (1778–1868), a rising lawyer who had made his reputation by a persistent and well-organized opposition to the Orders in Council. But the very qualities to which he owed his success were in themselves dangerous. He allowed himself to be carried away by his own restless and energetic

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versatility; and he was extraordinarily vain—he “bowed,” said a Radical, “to his



HENRY RICHARD VASSALL FOX, THIRD BARON
HOLLAND

From the Painting by J. Simpson, after C. R. Leslie, in the National Portrait Gallery.

own image.” His rancour and want of scruple, again, robbed him of friends; whilst his lack of judgment made men unwilling to trust him.

“Brougham cannot take the place (of leader),” wrote Creevey in 1816, “for his unpopularity and want of discretion.” It was not until younger men began to make their way that the Whig group began to command respect and confidence.

In addition to the Tories and the Whigs, there was a third party in the country—though it had little weight in parliament. This was the Radical party, which was to provide the motive power of legislative change, and from which many—some would say most—of the fruitful political ideas of the century were to come.

Like the Whigs and the Tories, the Radicals were divided in 1815 into two main groups. The first drew its inspiration from the French Revolution and from that early reforming tradition which, while owing something to the revolt of the American colonies,

had an independent and purely British origin. In a vague way, these Radicals believed in the doctrine of the rights of man. Their objects, however, were practical and their policy was little affected by theory. The veteran of the group was Major Cartwright (1740–1824), “the Father of Reform”; in parliament it was led by Sir Francis Burdett (1770–1844), a man of great wealth, imposing appearance and ready speech. Self-important, condescending and theatrical, Burdett, who had been returned in 1807 for the city of Westminster, persuaded himself that he was an earnest and radical reformer, and sometimes communicated the persuasion to others, but he lacked the qualities required of the creator of a strong party, and the ability to ensure the triumph of a great cause.

Another Radical who attained considerable popularity outside parliament, by what Holland called his “brawling eloquence,” was Henry Hunt (1773–1835). “Orator” Hunt, as he was named, was “always beating against a tempest of his own or others’ creating”; he had none of the skill, per-



SIR FRANCIS BURDETT

From the Painting in water-colours, attributed to Adam Buck, in the National Portrait Gallery.

WORK OF FRANCIS PLACE

sistence and judgment needed to turn the enthusiasm which his eloquence produced



Francis Place
FRANCIS PLACE

From the Drawing by Daniel Maclise, R.A., in "Fraser's Magazine," 1836.

London Corresponding Society—the first great association of the working classes for the advocacy of parliamentary reform. As a journeyman he had endured bitter privations; but after a long struggle, courageously sustained, he had been able to set up in business, at first (1799) with a partner and afterwards alone (1801).

In sixteen years he earned a competence and was then free (1817) to devote his whole energies to the task of political and educational reform. Place always kept himself in the background, for he had a shrewd notion of his own limitations. Full of political knowledge, a master of exact detail, strong in committee and even stronger in organization, he had no popular gifts either as a writer or a speaker. His sturdy common sense taught him that his gifts lay in the direction of private persuasion rather than of public advocacy. He could draw up an incomparable brief, but he could not present the case. And all his life he willingly surrendered the credit to others as the necessary price of making his knowledge useful and his work effective.

Place was the link between the older school of Radical reformers and the second group of Radicals then gathering round

into the motive force of a successful political agitation.

Greater than any of these was Francis Place (1771–1854), the Radical tailor of Charing Cross, one of the shrewdest politicians and most skilful organizers of the century. Early in life he had gained experience in the management of trade clubs, the precursors of trade unions, and in the direction of the



JEREMY BENTHAM

From the Painting by H. W. Pickersgill, in the National Portrait Gallery.



HENRY HUNT

From the water-colour Drawing by Adam Buck, in the National Portrait Gallery.

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Jeremy Bentham. In 1808 Place was introduced to Bentham, whose long life (1748–1832) almost spanned the interval between the last Jacobite rebellion and the great Reform Bill. At first sight no friendship could have been less promising. Place stood for those whose political interests had been warmed at the generous fires of the French Revolution, and whose theories—so far as they troubled themselves with theories—sprang from the doctrine of the rights of man. Bentham had begun his literary and political career by demolishing in his *Fragments on Government* (1776) the doctrine of natural rights as embodied in the American Declaration of Independence. Place was a self-taught artisan; Bentham belonged to the comfortable middle class. "All his sympathies," said Sir Leslie Stephen, "were those of the middle class, from which he sprang. He was no democrat."

Bentham and Benthamism

Bentham's utilitarian and individualistic theories, in fact, chimed harmoniously with an age when the middle class, growing in wealth and strength, was aspiring to political power. It was Bentham who gave the reformers their slogan—the principle, as he called it, of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." To realize this principle, Bentham desired to see the law reformed in many directions. But, thwarted by an indifferent parliament and by obstructive officials, he came to believe that law reform could not be achieved until the parliament, which made the laws, had itself been reformed, and he learnt to commend "the policy of making public functionaries uneasy." Here the practical tailor and the wealthy theorist joined hands.

Bentham supported parliamentary reform as an essential preliminary to more extensive amendments of the law; the reformers accepted Benthamism because it gave them a war-cry and a programme. Benthamism became the real motive force, in so far as it was theoretic and not industrial, which carried the Reform Bill of 1832. Benthamite individualism became the predominant influence in British legislation from 1825 or 1830 to the middle of the 'seventies, or even later.

Bentham gathered round him a band of disciples: the missionaries of his doctrine, the expounders of his dark sayings, the editors of his tortuous manuscripts. His chief of staff was James Mill (1773–1836), a stickit Presbyterian minister, turned journalist and historian. Mill influenced David Ricardo (1772–1823), the son of a Dutch Jew, whose *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817) was to direct the current of economic thought. John Ramsay McCulloch (1789–1864), a genial, whisky-loving Scot, upheld Benthamism in the *Scotsman* and the *Edinburgh Review*. Joseph Hume (1777–1855), the persevering advocate in the House of Commons of economy in public expenditure, and Place's frequent pupil, often acted with the Benthamites; whilst John and Leigh Hunt "trumpeted" Benthamism in the *Examiner*.

Philosophical Radicalism

In time there arose a number of younger thinkers and politicians—John Stuart Mill (1806–73), the son of James Mill, George Grote (1794–1871) the historian (and, it may be added, his strong-minded wife), John Austin (1790–1859) the jurist, and Charles Austin (1799–1874), the friend of Macaulay—who formed the group known as Philosophical Radicals. This group exercised a profound influence upon political thought in the middle of the century. In 1818 the two streams of Radicalism, represented by the Benthamites on the one side and by the older reformers on the other, may be said to have coalesced when Sir Francis Burdett moved a series of resolutions in favour of parliamentary reform, universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and the ballot, which had been drawn up in conjunction with Bentham.

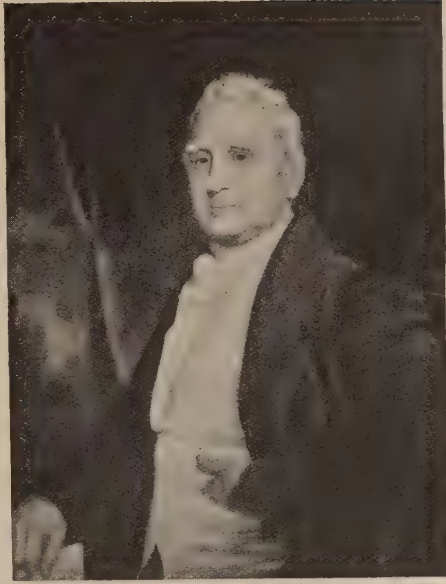
Behind the Radical politicians were the Radical journalists, who lived a precarious life, and were often imprisoned but never daunted—William Hone (1780–1842), of *The Reformer's Register*, J. T. Wooler (1786–1853), of *The Black Dwarf*, Richard Carlile (1790–1843), the intrepid publisher, who spent nine years in jail, and was "specially hated by the respectable"; and—greatest of all—William Cobbett (1762–

CHARACTER OF COBBETT

1835). A self-taught man and an individualist to the core, Cobbett was, says a fellow-Radical, "the perfect representation of what he always wished to be: an English gentleman farmer." Filled with a deep and genuine feeling for the English countryside, he could have discussed farming on equal terms with Coke of Holkham. But he was conscious of the new forces that were working in the nation, and after 1816 it was to the working classes of industrial England that Cobbett made his chief appeal.

There were many inconsistencies in his political and journalistic career. But he was a vigorous and pungent journalist, delighting in battle, and the master of a clear and convincing style. He floored his controversial opponents, said Hazlitt, "with a three-man beetle." It was possible to dislike him but not to ignore him; and after 1816, when he began to publish a cheap edition of his *Political Register*—which opponents called "Twopenny Trash"—he captured a vast popular audience, his writings being eagerly read "on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire."

Long-pent discontents were unloosed by



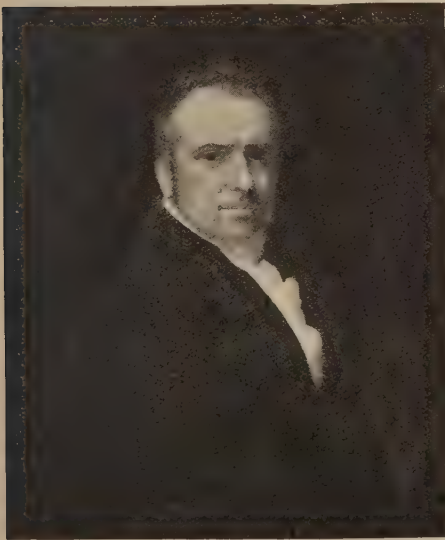
WILLIAM COBBETT

From the Painting in the National Portrait Gallery.

the peace and Napoleon's banishment. On every side there arose a clamorous demand for lighter taxes, less waste and better management of the national finances. The Whigs made much of the opportunity. But the clamour did not come from the opposition alone. Throughout 1816, as Castlereagh told Wellington, there were "endless debates upon economy and a sour discontented temper among our own friends." In 1816 the abolition of the property tax was carried against the ministry; as also was the reduction of the malt tax. Both these taxes affected mainly the agricultural interests, which were strongly represented in parliament. The attack upon them was probably selfish and sectional, but it was an index of the prevailing temper.

Castlereagh complained in 1817 of the "ignorant impatience for the relaxation of taxation," and there was some justice in his complaint. Reduced taxation, without reduced expenditure and improved management, was no remedy for a disordered exchequer.

Retrenchment was the rallying-cry of the Whigs. They scrutinized minute details of



WILLIAM HONE

From the Painting by George Patten, A.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

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every vote—particularly the votes for the royal household. They attacked sinecures and carped at pensions. Public opinion was with them. When thousands were without the barest necessities of life, it seemed monstrous to pay officials for imaginary duties or to spend £60,000 on the trousseau of a princess. Ministers tried to cut down



JOSEPH HUME

From the Chalk Drawing by C. Blair Leighton, in the National Portrait Gallery.

redundant expenditure. In 1817 a "retrenching committee" was appointed, economies were made, and a number of sinecures were abolished, though a limited power of granting political pensions was retained. In 1820 the extortionate demands of George IV for a fat civil list were firmly resisted.

Other economies were due either directly or indirectly to the work of Joseph Hume, a persevering Scottish doctor who had made a fortune in India and had returned home to enter political life. Originally a Tory, neglect had driven him into the Radical camp. Hume made economy one of the hobbies of his life, and earned the nickname of "Penny Wise." He was an undoubted bore, a poor speaker. But he had something to say, and O'Connell declared that

he would have been a good speaker if he could have finished one sentence before beginning the next but one. Often defeated, he never acknowledged a beating and always returned to the attack. In 1821 he secured an important reform by which the collection of the revenue was simplified, purified and cheapened.

Attacked by the Whigs, pressed by the country gentlemen on their own side, and harassed by the unsleeping Hume, ministers were driven, whether they willed it or not, to such care of the public money that in the end they might have claimed, not unfairly, to be a retrenching government. Yet these reforms did not go to the root of the evil. Wholesale revision of the system of taxation was needed, and neither ministers nor the majority of their critics knew how this ought to be effected.

The system by which money was borrowed was fundamentally unsound. The chancellor of the exchequer still clung to a pathetic belief in the virtues of the sinking fund, and even borrowed money at a high rate of interest to meet a deficit whilst he set aside a sinking fund which was used to pay off loans borrowed at a lower rate of interest. In 1819 Huskisson pointed out the fallacy of this procedure, but his advice was ignored, and a mistake was repeated which involved a change of creditors and a loss of credit.

One cause of financial disorganization was the long delay in the resumption of cash payments. During the war the Bank of England had been released from the obligation to redeem its notes in gold. The notes, therefore, had depreciated in value. A committee under the chairmanship of Robert Peel reported in 1819 in favour of the gradual resumption of cash payments, which parliament decided must take complete effect by 1823. The governor of the Bank of England had counselled the committee against resumption. But when the bank was compelled to obey the mandate of parliament it proved strong enough by 1821 to resume cash payments without waiting for the period of grace to expire. It has generally been held that this reform helped greatly to restore the credit and commerce of the country.

REVIVAL OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

Economic distress and social disorders gave a great impetus to the demand for a reform of parliament. Political agitation rose and fell during these years as the stress of want and misery increased and relaxed. Advanced Radicals held that tilting at sinecures and cobbling budgets was like attacking the outward symptoms of a malady which called for the surgeon's knife—it might give temporary relief, but it could effect no permanent cure. Bad parliaments would not make good laws. Radical reforms would not come from a parliament which itself needed radical reform.

Major Cartwright's Activities

For a dozen years after the formal suppression of the political societies in 1799 the reform movement had slept, save for the brief awakening in 1807 when Burdett had been elected for Westminster. But in 1812 the reformers, inspired by Cartwright, who believed for the twentieth time that the political millennium was at hand, had begun to organize themselves anew. The Hampden Club had been formed to advocate annual parliaments and a franchise including all who paid direct taxes. The Reform Union advocated the same policy. Both these societies were middle-class organizations and were highly respectable. But they had imitators in all the great towns, and the provincial societies, with their wider membership, helped to prepare a new agitation. The movement was fostered by Cartwright, who toured the country, especially the northern districts, as the apostle of reform. From about 1816 onwards Cobbett, too, undertook a series of similar missionary journeys.

This revival terrified ministers. They dreaded reform, as the Home Office papers show, more than they feared the riots of starving peasants or the destruction of machinery by unemployed artisans. Such disturbances were common in the early years of a peace which was followed by want instead of the expected plenty. But hunger bred reformers as well as rioters. The ministry indiscriminately suppressed both, sometimes employing agents who fomented violence in order that they might inform against their dupes.

In London, towards the end of 1816, a number of obscure persons, "two broken-down apothecaries, a broken-down gentleman (Thistlewood), and two cobblers," organized a couple of meetings in an open space called the Spa Fields, in order to petition the regent to relieve the distress of the artisans. The second meeting ended, after some wild and wordy talk, in a riotous march to the city, and the plunder of a gunsmith's shop. The riot was easily suppressed. But an informer, known as "Castle the Spy," declared that the plan had been to seize the Tower and set up a Committee of Public Safety.

All the ancient dread of the French Revolution was awakened by the name. An insignificant riot was raised to the dignity of a serious conspiracy and its ringleaders were prosecuted for high treason. Brilliantly defended by Copley (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst), they were acquitted, in defiance of the judge, by a jury which was convinced, after a merciless cross-examination of Castle, that if offences more serious than riot had been committed by anyone, the guilt rested upon Castle himself. Yet the folly of the rioters had serious results. Advantage was taken of the alarm which they had aroused to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and to pass an act for the prevention of seditious meetings so sweeping in character that for a time even the Cambridge Union was laid under the ban.

March of the Blanketeers

To protest against these measures was one of the avowed objects of the foolish but picturesque enterprise known as the March of the Blanketeers. The marchers were to trudge from Manchester to London, sleeping in churches or by the wayside, each man carrying a blanket as a protection against the rigours of the March nights. The Blanketeers were to petition the regent to dismiss his ministers. But their ideas were vague. In the petition they tilted against the Corn Bill, the prosecution of Radical journalists, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and, as the fundamental cause of bad measures, the unrepresentative character of parliament.

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Yet neither the motives nor the objects of the petitioners were really political. The heart of their trouble is to be found in that part of the petition in which they described their privations, telling how the drain of rent and taxes absorbed their all, leaving nothing for themselves. They seem in the main to have been distressed cotton-weavers, whose net earnings, in fairly typical instances, ranged at this period between two shillings and half a crown a week. It was "to make a better living," as one of them said, that they went to petition the regent.

Dispersal of the Blanketeers

The plan of the Blanketeers was no secret. Magistrates, the military, and the police, in unanimity of panic, agreed that the marchers must be stopped. Some of them, including the two leaders, were arrested at a meeting in St. Peter's Fields, which had assembled on March 10th, 1817, to give a "send-off" to this raw, ill-nourished army. The meeting was dispersed, but a considerable body of the marchers had already started. A large number were captured at Stockport and sent back to Manchester. A few more were taken at Ashbourne, where the majority were turned back by the yeomanry. Only a few stragglers, most of whom were persuaded at Derby to return home, got farther south. Of the Blanketeers who started, perhaps about seven hundred strong, one alone succeeded in reaching London. There he presented his petition to Lord Sidmouth on March 18th.*

Only one serious casualty marred these peaceable if ineffective proceedings; for it the Blanketeers were not to blame. It occurred at Heaton Norris, where a spectator was killed in his own garden by one of the soldiers. The magistrates at Manchester, encumbered by numerous prisoners, found themselves in a ludicrous plight, for they could think of no charge to prefer against their victims, and they were obviously afraid that, when released, their prisoners would have charges to prefer against them. The dilemma into which their zeal had brought

these puzzled justices is itself proof enough, if proof were required, of the innocence of the Blanketeers.

Acting on advice from London, the justices found excuses as best they could for quietly releasing nearly all the prisoners. Nine they ventured to commit to the assizes, but the case against them was so thin that it was not persevered with and the prisoners were released without a trial.†

It is the curse of unintelligent repression that it defeats its own purpose. Stifled discontents are more dangerous than articulate grievances. When the visible channels of popular agitation are choked, both the governors and the governed, moreover, are at the mercy of spies and informers.

Oliver the Spy

A few days after the collapse of the Blanketeers the Home Office began to employ one of these decoys, a scoundrel who became notorious as Oliver the Spy, though he had used other names than Oliver, and was already a bigamist and a fraudulent bankrupt. During the early summer of 1817 Oliver did his best, with scant success, to stir up violence in the midlands and the north, by spreading amongst the distressed and discontented the story of a projected general rising.

In two places only were his efforts rewarded—at Huddersfield, where a mob exchanged shots with yeomanry who were guarding a bridge, and then mysteriously disappeared; and at Nottingham, where Oliver fell in with a complaisant tool, an unemployed framework knitter, called Jeremiah Brandreth. This man's impressionable mind readily absorbed Oliver's tale of a general insurrection, and on Sunday, June 8th—having some strange power of influencing his fellows—Brandreth raised a force, principally of unemployed workmen, at Penkridge, or Penkrich, about fourteen miles from Nottingham, but just inside the Derbyshire border.

Brandreth told his men—probably in good faith, for he was as much deluded as de-

* Judging from the date of his arrival, it seems reasonable to conjecture that he had found a lift by the way, and thereby escaped the attention of those who had intercepted the march of his comrades.

† On the Blanketeers see J. L. and B. Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, pp. 343-9. On the more dangerous activities of four spies and of a starving barber anxious to be employed as informer, see pp. 350-3.

DERBYSHIRE RISING AND PETERLOO

luding—that they were to march on Nottingham to support a rising which was to begin there that night. Possibly a couple of hundred men, armed mostly with “spikes” or “sticks with things in them,” started with him; a few only had fire-arms. On the march Brandreth killed a manservant with a random shot, probably fired in order to intimidate his victim’s master. The miserable band, already dwindling and rather scared, tramped through pouring rain across the border into Nottinghamshire. There, at six in the morning, they caught sight of a small detachment of dragoons sent out to intercept them. “They no sooner saw the troops,” wrote a magistrate who accompanied the dragoons, “than they fled in all directions . . . they did not fire a single shot and seemed intent only on escape.”

Fate of Brandreth

Forty-eight were taken; and after a delay of four months thirty-five were charged—before carefully packed juries—with the formidable crime of high treason. Twenty-three were convicted and sentenced to death and the charges against twelve were withdrawn. Brandreth and two others were hanged. The sentences on the rest were commuted to terms of transportation or imprisonment. Oliver was found official employment at the Cape of Good Hope, where he crowned a nefarious career by misappropriating public funds. But enough was known of his proceedings in England for the opposition to press ministers with exceedingly inconvenient questions, and the system of espionage was so much discredited that the government seems to have deemed it wise hereafter to make more sparing use of these dangerous tools. It is, indeed, amply proved by official papers that if there had been no spies like Oliver and his kind there would have been no Derbyshire rising.

There followed some months of relative prosperity, and as the pressure of want was relaxed there came a lull in popular agitation. But with the return of economic depression in 1819 there came a revival of political agitation. Petitions for reform were freely signed in the great towns and cities. As a result of Cartwright’s advice to send their

petition “in the form of a living man,” the Birmingham reformers, at a large public meeting, went through the solemn farce of electing Sir Charles Wolseley as their “legislational attorney.”

Reform Meeting at Manchester

A more famous meeting, to be addressed by Orator Hunt in favour of reform, was planned at Manchester. It was held on August 16th in St. Peter’s Fields, an open space near the present Central Station. Parties marched to Manchester in procession from surrounding towns and villages. In order to control the concourse of people, the processionists had been drilled and disciplined beforehand, and the authorities affected to believe that these drillings covered some sinister purpose. Bamford, who marched with the procession from Middleton, claimed that all was open and above-board, that “there were no midnight drillings, . . . no concealed meetings.” But there is better proof that no violence was intended in the fact that the processions were joined by people of both sexes and of all ages, and that, in some of the processions at least, only the aged and infirm were allowed to carry so much as a walking-stick.

Estimates vary of the number of men, women and children who crowded into St. Peter’s Fields. The highest—Hunt’s, who bragged that there were a hundred and fifty thousand people there—is certainly an exaggeration. The police apparently put the figure at sixty thousand, which is still large but seems more reasonable. The magistrates might have stopped the meeting, but they shrank from the responsibility of declaring it illegal. The night before, Hunt had volunteered to surrender himself, but the offer had been refused. The promoters of the meeting had therefore good grounds for believing that there was no intention of interfering with him. But Hunt had scarcely begun his speech when the magistrates decided to arrest him.

Nadin, the head of such police as Manchester then possessed, declared that it was impossible to make the arrest without military assistance. Yeomanry and hussars were in waiting. The yeomanry, but recently

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recruited, and inexperienced in the management of their horses, charged in some disorder. The terrified people tried to squeeze open a way for them, a path was cleared to the platform, and Hunt was arrested.*

The duty of the yeomanry was done. But they were now mad with excitement, and rode on, slashing right and left, and trampling

between five and six hundred persons were wounded or injured, of whom one hundred and thirteen were women.

Panic, prejudice, and want of judgment had combined in the twinkling of an eye to bring about a terrible catastrophe. But the perpetrators of the outrage were solemnly thanked for their services by the regent



THE MASSACRE OF PETERLOO, AUGUST 16, 1819

This plate is inscribed, "To Henry Hunt, Esq., as chairman of the meeting assembled on St. Peter's Field, Manchester, on the 16th of August, 1819, and to the Female Reformers of Manchester and the adjacent towns who were exposed to, and suffered from, the wanton and furious attack made on them by that brutal armed force, the Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry."

From the Engraving in the Historical Portfolio (1819) in the British Museum.

over the tightly packed mass of humanity. Supported by the hussars, they cleared the ground in ten minutes: the disappearance of the crowd seemed almost magical. But eleven lives were lost in the struggle, including those of two women and a child; and

* Yet a path from the house where the magistrates were assembled, to the hustings from which Hunt spoke, had been kept open by special constables all the time. On the whole subject of Peterloo, see Dr. F. A. Burton's *The Story of Peterloo*, and his edition of *Three Accounts of Peterloo*, giving contemporary narratives.

himself. This official condonation of a ghastly blunder increased the rising indignation of the public. Up and down the country, meetings of protest were held in most of the large towns, and in some places public subscriptions were opened for the relief of the injured. With a touch of exaggeration the attack on the Manchester meeting was named, in popular speech, the Manchester Massacre, or the Battle of Peterloo.

This incident was made the excuse for fresh measures of repression. Hunt, Bam-

GOVERNMENT POLICY OF REPRESSION

ford, and one or two associates were imprisoned for no visible misdeeds. But the ordinary law was represented as inadequate by alarmed ministers. With the support of Grenville and his friends, they hurried through a series of bills, known later as the Six Acts, which earned for this parliament the name of the Savage Parliament.

Sidmouth, who was responsible for home

for arms by the police, could be defended. A third, which forbade unauthorized military exercises, was merely ridiculous. The rest were, as they were meant to be, savage acts of repression. They were designed to check seditious publications (a design to be interpreted, in the light of the official conviction, that to advocate any reform was sedition); to cripple the popular press by subjecting



"THE MASSACRE OF PETERLOO, OR BRITONS STRIKE HOME"

From the Drawing by George Cruikshank (published in 1819).

affairs, was in the Lords. In the Commons, therefore, Castlereagh had to defend these measures as the spokesman of the government, and they account in some degree for the odium which still rests upon his name. Even Brougham, however, did not oppose the principle of the acts; he desired to see the Radicals "and their vile press put down at all hazards"; and he was content to modify in a few particulars the harshness of the measures first proposed.

One of the bills, for securing the speedier trial of prisoners, was welcomed, as amended by Holland in the Lords, by the reformers themselves. Another, to facilitate searches

occasional publications as well as ordinary newspapers and magazines to a stamp duty; and to restrict the right of public meeting.

Once again, repression defeated itself. The moderate working-class reformers were crushed; but the extremists, plotting in secret, began to think that they could command public sympathy for acts of violence. Thistlewood, one of the leaders in the Spa Fields riot, gathered round him a small group of men who formed a mad plot to blow up or assassinate the whole cabinet at a dinner party, to throw London into confusion by firing the barracks and the Mansion House, and then to set up a provisional

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government around which they persuaded themselves that the people would rally. It was a ridiculous plot of less than thirty half-educated men, led by a maniac.

The conspirators had no resources, no supporters, no influence even with the working classes, who would certainly have disowned their leadership. The government was warned in ample time. A spy, if he was no worse, called Edwards, had kept the Home Office well informed since November, 1819, and the plot did not mature till February, 1820, when ministers received an independent warning from one of the genuine conspirators. The plot was evaded by the simple expedient of putting off the dinner. The lair of the plotters, a loft in Cato Street (hence the high-sounding name of the Cato Street Conspiracy), was surrounded, and the plot ended in a fight with the police, in which a constable lost his life. Thistlewood and four others were hanged, as they deserved to be. But Sidmouth had known all there was to know, except the precise date and manner of the attack, for fully three months. It is impossible, therefore, to acquit him of callousness in failing to stop the conspiracy before it became a hanging matter.

Situation in Europe

By an odd paradox, the government which had been fighting against constitutional improvement at home had been struggling to protect it abroad. In 1815 the statesmen of Europe were governed in their relations with one another by two dominant motives—the fear of a fresh outbreak of that revolutionary fever which they called Jacobinism, and the desire to fulfil the yearning of all nations for a stable peace. But the two motives fused unequally in different minds; for whereas some, like Castlereagh, feared Jacobinism principally as a menace to peace, others, like Metternich, who directed the policy of Austria, desired peace mainly because they feared Jacobinism.

After a great war, diplomatists are always obsessed by the belief (generally erroneous) that the next menace will come from the last point of danger. The last point of danger to Europe had been the revolutionary fervour of France, issuing in the militant and aggres-

sive empire of Napoleon; and Alexander of Russia, whose mystical soul had been kindled at the fires of Moscow and who saw in the overthrow of Bonaparte the workings of a special Providence, proposed that the sovereigns of Europe should join together in an act of thankfulness to God for past protection, and in pledges for future good behaviour; they were to vow themselves one to another in a common brotherhood for the preservation of universal peace, and each was to make a solemn declaration that he would act towards his people like a father to his family. This document, known as "the Holy Alliance," was signed by the rulers of Russia, Prussia and Austria. The regent, whose constitutional position made it impossible for him to join in a compact essentially personal, gave his consent by letter. But the Holy Alliance had little value or importance. To Alexander it was, as he said himself, "an act of adoration."

The Quadruple Alliance

When politicians later denounced the Holy Alliance they did so in error; their attacks were really directed against the quadruple alliance of Prussia, Russia, Austria and England (November, 1815) to enforce the terms of peace imposed upon France after the second fall of Napoleon, and to guarantee the European settlement which had been made at Vienna.

The danger of attempting to give territorial guarantees of this kind, as Great Britain has more than once discovered in her dealings with the native princes of India, is that they lead insensibly to the protection of the established order in the internal affairs of any state which benefits from them. They may be so interpreted as to shield bad governors and to deprive their peoples of remedies for misgovernment. And in the generation after Waterloo this was peculiarly the case in Europe, where political disturbances seemed likely to upset the delicate balance of continental power.

Metternich certainly intended that this concert of the major powers of Europe should be used to crush constitutional agitation wherever it manifested itself. He easily won over the King of Prussia to these views, and

FOREIGN POLICY OF CASTLEREAGH

the hopes of the German constitutionalists, who had flung themselves into the war against Napoleon in the belief that they were fighting in a crusade for liberty, were almost everywhere disappointed. More slowly Metternich converted the Tsar Alexander to his reactionary policy, and from 1818 or 1819 there did, in fact, exist a European

ally on the side of the constitutionalists abroad.

In 1820, southern Europe was disturbed by two revolutions—one in Spain, the other in the kingdom of Naples and Sicily. Both revolutions had been provoked by scandalous misgovernment. The reactionary powers, terrified at the prospect of a revival of re-



THE CATO STREET CONSPIRATORS SURPRISED, FEBRUARY 23, 1820

Cruikshank visited the loft in order to draw the interior, and, from a description supplied by Mr. Ruthven, drew the fight.

From the contemporary Drawing by George Cruikshank.

conspiracy, led by the great eastern powers, against those constitutional agitations which Metternich comprehensively condemned as Jacobinism.

Castlereagh had foreseen this danger from the first. But peace was his first object, and he wished to preserve the machinery for maintaining it. By periodical meetings of the quadruple alliance, which Metternich intended to develop into an engine of repression, Castlereagh hoped to effect an insurance against the rupture of peace. He was in no sense the dupe of Metternich, and, however reactionary he may have seemed at home, his secret sympathies were gener-

volutionary enthusiasm which might spread from the states in which it broke out to the territories of other sovereigns, desired to unite in stamping out a dangerous infection. Castlereagh refused to let England become a party to this campaign. But Austria had large interests in Italy; she held Lombardy and Venetia in direct sovereignty, and exercised a predominant influence over the rest of the peninsula. Except at the price of war, therefore, Castlereagh could scarcely prevent Austria from intervening in what she conceived to be her interests. Accordingly, acting upon her own responsibility, and not as the mandatory of

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Europe, Austria sent an army into Naples, where King Ferdinand was restored to the misgovernment of his suffering subjects.

The case of Spain was more difficult. There Castlereagh steadily resisted and protested against any interference. His last act was to set forth the principles of British foreign policy which he intended to make his guide in a congress of the powers at Verona where he was to represent Great Britain in 1822. They were the sound maxims of foreign policy, seldom departed from by Britain without subsequent regret : that it is for each country to decide for itself upon the government best suited to its needs, and that it is no part of the duty of any foreign power to intervene in the domestic differences of another.

Castlereagh did not succeed in protecting the Neapolitan reformers ; and he succeeded

only in postponing interference in Spain. But he did make it plain that when the reactionary powers strove to crush constitutional movements by creating a system of international police, they could not sustain their claim to be acting in the name of a united and unanimous Europe.

Castlereagh did not live to expound his own policy at Verona. Overwrought by ten years of strenuous and persistent labour, his mind at last gave way, and on August 12th, 1822, he met death by his own hand. Death came to him, by perversity of fortune, at the very moment when he was openly espousing a policy intelligible to the British people, which might have won for him at last a measure of popularity. His body passed to Westminster Abbey amid the hisses of the crowd, and it has been left to the present generation to redeem his reputation.



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT IN 1821

From an Aquatint by R. Havell.



THE PARADE, ST. JAMES'S PARK: "MOUNTING GUARD" (1823)

From a water-colour Drawing by Rowlandson, in the Crace Collection (xii, 43, 71), in the British Museum.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW TORYISM (1822-8)

FOR seven years after Waterloo, English politics were dominated by Castlereagh; the next five years were the years of Canning's supremacy. In 1822 he was in his fifty-third year, and the brilliant promise of his dawning manhood had yet to be fulfilled. If he had died before Castlereagh he would have ranked among the secondary figures of British history. At the very moment, indeed, when the melancholy end of his great rival opened to Canning the gates of opportunity, he was reconciling himself, not without bitterness of spirit, to the defeat of his high ambitions. For a year and a half he had been out of office. He had retired in December, 1820, because he shrank, in honourable distaste, from the attack upon the queen, with whom he had, in former days, been on terms of friendship. It seemed as if his career were about to end in eclipse. Seeking a dignified escape from a situation

that must have been galling to his pride, he had just accepted the governor-generalship of India—"banishment to India for want of honesty," as the spiteful Creevey rather unjustly called it—when the death of Castlereagh transformed his prospects.

Canning succeeded Castlereagh at the foreign office. But this was not the whole of the change. Sidmouth had already been replaced at the home office by safe, sound, common-sense Peel, refreshed by a long holiday after his six strenuous years of administrative apprenticeship in Ireland.

At the beginning of 1823 room was found in the ministry for friends of Canning. "Pound Foolish" Vansittart left the exchequer to make way for Robinson; and Huskisson, an abler man, who was brimming with ideas, followed Robinson at the board of trade. Canning's victory was, as yet, by no means complete, but the promotion of his friends

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meant that the "old guard" of Toryism had been compelled to give him pledges of good behaviour. Taken together with the return of Peel to office, it gave promise of increased efficiency in administration, for if Robinson was far from brilliant he was a genius in comparison with Vansittart, and he was at least anxious to simplify our tangled finances,

Then in February, 1827, Liverpool had a paralytic seizure. Nothing demonstrates his usefulness more clearly than the confusion which followed. The ministry seemed to separate at once into its component elements. For once the House of Lords failed to yield an amiable figurehead who could take up Liverpool's task of fusing the sundered



THE POWERS AT VERONA

Russia, with Prussia at its feet, faces Austria, advised by Metternich. Wellington warns France.

From "Caricatures," 1823 (No. 1868-8-8-8578), in the British Museum.

whilst Huskisson had financial abilities of the first order. The ministry was not, it is true, a happy family. Sharply divided as it was on the Catholic claims, as well as on other questions, its members were only held together by the slender thread of Lord Liverpool's life. But Liverpool gave Canning his loyal support. And Peel and Canning, though deeply pledged to opposite opinions on Catholic relief, disappointed their opponents by working together in apparent harmony.

This concordat lasted for over four years.

elements of the Tory party into an effective administration. Neither Peel nor Wellington thought it possible to form an exclusively "Protestant" ministry, for the section of the Tory party which opposed the Catholic claims was stronger in prejudice than in ability, and Peel recoiled from a single-handed contest in the Commons against a combination of Canningites and Whigs.

After two months of political uncertainty Canning became prime minister. He had attained at last the goal of his ambition, but he did not reach it in full strength. He

MINISTRY OF CANNING

had no assured majority; he was dependent on the Whigs, who disliked him, and opposed by the "Protestant" Tories, who distrusted him. Canning's own health was failing, and like Peel he could not furnish a whole cabinet with men of first-class ability from his own section of the party. He was, therefore, compelled to do too much himself. Along

with individuals. Lord Lansdowne lent the ministry some weight in the Lords, but Tierney alone among the prominent Whigs would help him in the Commons. Even these recruits were only obtained after long negotiation and did not join him at the outset. "The history of Canning's premiership," it has been well said, "is rather that of



CANNING AS PRIME MINISTER, 1827

With Wellington and Eldon out of office, Canning is represented turning to Whigs and Radicals for the materials of "an honest ministry."

From "Caricatures," 1827 (No. 1868-8-8-2764), in the British Museum.

with the treasury he took the exchequer, which he would have done better to confide to Huskisson; and as Dudley, at the foreign office, though an able man, was without experience, he was compelled to keep a close watch over its affairs. His most important capture was Sir John Copley, who was made Lord Lyndhurst and became lord chancellor. A coalition with the Whigs might have saved the situation. But the straiter school of Whiggism was against Canning, and he could only win over indi-

viduals. Lord Lansdowne lent the ministry some weight in the Lords, but Tierney alone among the prominent Whigs would help him in the Commons. Even these recruits were only obtained after long negotiation and did not join him at the outset.

"The history of Canning's premiership," it has been well said, "is rather that of

* Temperley, *Canning*, p. 224.

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Robinson, now Viscount Goderich, who attempted to carry on a Canningite ministry. But the king interfered with his assignment of offices, and Goderich was utterly incapable of controlling a cabinet or of resisting the king. When he ran dry of arguments he was reputed to resort to tears. He resigned office at the beginning of January, 1828, without even meeting parliament.

Wellington consented to form a moderate Tory ministry with the assistance of Peel, who seems during 1826-7 to have been slowly, and perhaps only half-consciously, converting himself to Catholic Emancipation. He now thought that any attempt to form "a united government on the principle of resistance to the claims of the Roman Catholics was perfectly hopeless." The ministry was, therefore, formed on the basis of a coalition between Canningites and Tories. Five ministers who may be reckoned as Canningites were included in it. Extreme party men on the Tory side were, of course, dissatisfied. But the cabinet as a whole made a good administrative team. With Peel to lead it in the Commons, it seemed at last to promise stability and efficiency after a year of political turmoil.

Spirit of Canning's Policy

Shortly after Canning inherited from Castlereagh his legacy of power in 1822 a contemporary declared that it was like "the golden age coming on the heels of the age of iron." And there was a contrast between the two periods, although contemporaries misread it, and we must still beware of the temptation to exaggerate it. We need constantly to remind ourselves that Canning was opposed to constitutional reform, and to the repeal of laws which still, in name at least, imposed civil disabilities on Protestant dissenters. He had supported domestic repression, and even in foreign policy, where his genius shone most brilliantly, he stood upon a platform which Castlereagh had erected. Yet it cannot be denied that with the advent of Canning to controlling power a new spirit was breathed into British policy. Castlereagh would probably have done the

same things; but Canning did them with more daring and more imagination.

When Castlereagh died a congress of the powers was assembling at Verona. Wellington was hastily dispatched in his stead, armed with the instructions which Castlereagh had prepared for himself. Rather unexpectedly Spanish affairs occupied the first place in the discussions of the congress. In Spain the revolution of 1820 had not worked out happily. The constitutionalists were too doctrinaire and had too little regard for historic and religious prejudices to be very persuasive advocates of their new and untried political system. Peasants and clericalists were united against them. The result was a kind of stalemate in which the monarchy was reduced to impotence, while the inexperienced constitutionalists were unable to establish an effective government.

Spain and the Powers

At Verona the reactionary powers, eager to treat the Spanish revolution as a bad example, were agreed on its suppression, but differed as to the means by which their end was to be achieved. Suspicion of Alexander induced them to reject his proposal that it should be done by Russian troops. But a party in France was eager that the restored monarchy should receive a baptism of military glory and saw an easy opportunity of securing it by intervention in Spain. The French envoy urged the powers to make France the instrument of joint intervention. Russia, Prussia and Austria agreed, in certain conditions, to support France. Wellington not merely refused to be a party to joint interference but protested energetically against it. His protest wrecked the plan of joint interference. But the eastern powers addressed notes to Spain intimating that they would withdraw their ministers unless the Spanish constitution were altered and real power placed once more in the hands of the king.

Meantime the war party in France had gained the upper hand, and France sent a similar, though milder, note to Spain. Spain rejected the notes and the ambassadors were withdrawn. Canning who had already made offers of mediation, saw that the

CANNING'S FOREIGN POLICY

Spanish constitution was in some respects unworkable and urged the Spanish government to modify it in the interest of stability and good order. But both parties were deaf to his entreaties. On April 7th, 1823, French troops crossed the Spanish frontier. They met with no effective resistance and the campaign was little more than a military procession. The Spanish constitution was overthrown and Ferdinand VII was restored to the unfettered exercise of absolute power.

Attitude towards Spain

Canning for a moment seems to have contemplated war, and he was criticized by some of the Whigs because he did not support the Spanish constitutionalists by force of arms. But he knew that the great powers were behind France, and he could scarcely have declaimed against foreign interference on behalf of the Spanish monarchists whilst he engaged in war to guarantee the Spanish constitution. He had to be content with the knowledge that he had given a severe shock to the eastern powers and had virtually destroyed the congress system as a method of anti-liberal police.

Yet there was one condition upon which Canning would have declared war. He suspected that French zeal for monarchy in Spain concealed a design for obtaining a reward for her assistance in the Spanish colonies of South America. These colonies had long been in revolt and Spain had failed to subdue them. Indeed the burdensome cost in men and treasure of many futile attempts to re-establish her authority in the New World had been one of the causes of the Spanish revolution. Canning made it clear that he would tolerate no interference by France in Spanish South America, and France disclaimed any aggressive designs.

In practice England had already accorded commercial recognition to the South American republics. The English trade with them was extensive and British commercial opinion was strongly in favour of the complete recognition of their independence. At the end of 1823 the United States accorded them the recognition that they desired in the document which laid down the "Monroe Doctrine," and it was clear that Spain could

never recover her control without risking a conflict with the United States which was beyond her strength. In 1824 Canning recognized the independence of Mexico, Colombia and Buenos Ayres; in 1825 he recognized Chile, Bolivia and Peru. In a grandiloquent phrase he claimed later that he had "called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old." He had done nothing of the kind. The new republics owed their independence to their own exertions, and the recognition of an accomplished fact in South America did nothing to redress the balance of power in Europe. Canning's title to statesmanship in this regard rests upon the narrower ground that he cemented a friendship between Great Britain and the South American republics, the foundations of which had been laid by British soldiers and sailors who had fought as volunteers in their behalf, and that he had, in conjunction with the United States, prevented the smaller republics of the New World from becoming the sport of European diplomacy.

Non-intervention in Portugal

The same general principle runs like a guiding thread through the whole of Canning's foreign policy. He was determined that England should offer resolute opposition to external interference in the domestic struggles of foreign states, especially when those states were too small or too weak to offer an effective resistance alone. In Portugal John VI, after his half-unwilling return from Brazil in 1821, found himself tossed like a shuttlecock between contending factions of constitutionalists and of royalists—more royalist than the king—neither of them strong enough to gain a decided mastery over the other. When their quarrels seemed likely, in 1823, and again in 1825, to invite foreign intervention, Canning offered a firm and successful resistance to it, as he likewise resisted a momentary inclination of the Portuguese to join in the French invasion of Spain. And when Brazil, proclaiming as emperor John's son, Don Pedro, whom he had left as regent, declared its independence of Portugal, it was largely due to Canning's diplomacy that an amicable parting was

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arranged between the powerful colony and its enfeebled motherland.

A struggle of a different kind was taking place in southern Europe. In February, 1821, the first revolts of the Greeks against Turkish domination unchained a war of race and religion stained, on both sides, by savage violence and ennobled by glowing heroism. The struggle of the Greeks for freedom and independence excited great sympathy in England—where, truth to tell, more was known about the traditions of classic Greece than of the extent to which the modern Greek had departed from them, or of the very recent revival by which ancient memories had been stirred and an embryonic national consciousness awakened. This sympathy moved Canning profoundly. But as the earliest risings were failures he could, at first, show his sympathy only in an attempt to secure from the Turk an amnesty for the Greek insurgents. Our ambassador was met with "coffee, pipes and preliminary deliberations," but could obtain no more solid satisfaction.

Greek War of Independence

Meantime the rebellion flickered and smouldered but was never wholly extinguished. It spread from the Morea to central Greece and to the Islands, and in 1822 a Turkish army was driven out of the Morea. In 1824 the Sultan turned for help to his powerful vassal, Mehemet Ali, Khedive of Egypt, who sent an army to Greece, under Ibrahim Pasha, which reconquered the Morea and seemed intent upon transporting or blotting out the whole of its Greek population. Canning had hitherto felt himself unable to intervene in the struggle, though he had recognized the Greeks as belligerents in March, 1823, and he had also thwarted a Russian plan for the division of Greece into principalities over which Russia would have exercised a predominant influence under the disguise of benevolent protection. In April, 1826, England was invited by the states-general of the insurgent Greeks to plead their cause with the great powers.

Canning took up the task. He succeeded in separating Russia from Austria, in win-

ning the support of France, and in obtaining the co-operation of a French squadron with the British fleet in Greek waters. In July, 1827, Russia, France and England agreed, in the Treaty of London, to insist upon an immediate armistice between the Greeks and Turks, the withdrawal of the Turks from Greek soil, and, subject to payment of a fixed tribute to Turkey, the grant of autonomy to Greece. If the Porte refused to accept these terms, the signatory powers pledged themselves to enforce them. Before the effect of combined action on the part of Russia, France and England could be fully seen, Canning died. But, though the Greeks had yet many difficulties to overcome, Canning had, as it proved, won for them their charter of independence.

Peel at the Home Office

Less spectacular than Canning's foreign policy but no less important was the gradual change in domestic administration when the home office began to feel the guiding hand of Peel. He checked at once the whole system of espionage by which Sidmouth had been so easily and so willingly duped. The trade of informer had thriven, just as the turbulence of the industrial towns had been fostered, by the absence of any regular and adequate machinery for the maintenance of public order. Crime was treated not as a disease to be prevented but as a wrong to be avenged. The chaotic and barbarous criminal law was therefore ineffective. But the only remedy for its ineffectiveness that had yet been tried was an increase in its penalties. There were two hundred capital offences, and hanging might be the penalty for petty thefts.

This severity defeated the ends of justice. Good citizens thought it no wrong to outwit the officers of the law, to aid or connive at escapes, or to evade the duty of prosecuting offenders. Juries disliked convicting when they knew that the punishment would be disproportionate to the crime. Individuals, or groups of individuals, in these ways took it upon themselves virtually to suspend the law at their discretion. Yet, notwithstanding acquittals and evasions, capital sentences were still so numerous that a lavish use of

PEEL'S POLICE SYSTEM

the prerogative of mercy became essential in conditions in which, from the very number of the cases to be reviewed, it could not be exercised with nice discrimination. The law therefore lacked the two qualities which make it effective—a just correspondence between crime and punishment, and certainty in its application.

Peel tackled these problems with vigour and with wisdom. His letters bear witness to the care with which he advised the Crown as to the grant of pardons. But he set himself to make such advice less necessary. For many years an agitation for the reform of the criminal law had been carried on by Romilly, Mackintosh and Jeremy Bentham. Romilly had won scant success. But in 1822 Mackintosh carried a resolution which pledged the House of Commons "to increase the efficiency by diminishing the rigour of our criminal jurisprudence." Peel accepted this principle. Between 1823 and 1828 he carried a series of measures which reduced the number of capital offences from two hundred to twelve. Peel had begun the humanization of the law. His policy has justified the contention of the reformers that certainty rather than severity of punishment is the true security for public order.

Peel's New Police Force

Peel sought to make punishment certain, but he also believed that prevention was better than cure. And prevention required an adequate system of police, which was almost everywhere lacking. This lack explains the constant use in trifling emergencies of soldiers and yeomanry; it explains noxious growths, like the gang of ruffians and ex-thieves employed by Nadin, the deputy-constable, at Manchester. The use of soldiers was provocative; farming out the police was extravagant and dangerous. Peel saw that a well-organized and permanent force of trained civilian police would give better results than a small and ineffective force, spasmodically augmented. He had tried his hand, when chief secretary for Ireland, at organizing an efficient police force, and he resolved to attempt a similar reform in England. In 1826 he instituted an inquiry into the system (or lack of

system) of police in London. It showed that in one parish there were eighteen police authorities, whilst in Brentford and Deptford there were no night police at all. Facts like this showed the need for reform. Peel's plans were not matured until his return to office in 1828, but in 1829 he succeeded in establishing the Metropolitan Police, a trained and disciplined force with the primary function of preventing crime and disorder. Peel's act did not apply to the provinces, but it affected them indirectly, for it was a precedent and a model, since imitated everywhere in most, though not in all, of its important features.

The Anti-Combination Laws

Another sign of changing times was the modification of the laws against the combination of workmen, though the credit for this reform belongs to Hume and Place rather than to the ministry. Any combination to raise wages was an offence at common law since it was held to be "in restraint of trade"; and in 1799 and 1800, during the panic engendered by the French Revolution, laws had been hurried through parliament which penalized all combinations whatsoever. These acts were so drastic that they made it a crime, complained one society, for one workman to discuss his trade with another. In theory the law forbade combinations of employers; but whilst the law was evaded on both sides, in practice the workmen were prosecuted, whereas the masters were not. An employer could dismiss all his workmen together if they refused the wages he offered, but it was illegal for his men to leave work in a body if they were refused the wages they asked. In spite of the law, trade unions maintained a struggling and precarious existence. Sometimes they were broken up, as when the Society of Coach-makers was paralysed in 1819 by the conviction of its secretary and twenty of its members. And the Six Acts had put additional difficulties in the way of associations of working men. But it was impossible to enforce laws so drastic with uniformity and success. Trade unions therefore struggled on in secret, protecting themselves against discovery by strange oaths and curious devices, which dis-

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appeared for the most part when the open existence of the unions was at length permitted.

It is possible that the need for permanent as distinct from temporary union had been comparatively little felt when the normal unit of employment was small. Modern research has shown that the capitalist employing a considerable number of workmen was less rare in the eighteenth century than used to be supposed. None the less, in the

These changes adversely affected the position of the wage-earner in two ways: the workman became more dependent on the demand for one particular kind of services, and had less chance of alternative employment; and as the unit of employment was enlarged, the employer became less dependent on the individual workman, though he might be more dependent on the body of his employees if they combined. In union, there-



TRADE UNIONISM IN 1820

Pictorial heading to the list of resolutions drawn up at a meeting of London hat-finishers, May 25, 1820.

From the Place MSS., Vol. 1 (MS. Add. 27799), in the British Museum.

normal conditions of industry the journeymen were few, and they were probably able to protect themselves against gross unfairness in the individual bargains which they made with their employer. But the growing "localization" of industry, the increased use of machinery, the decay of by-industries or the disappearance of supplementary occupations, the greater subdivision of industry, and the increase in the average number of the "hands" engaged by one employer created new conditions in which the individual workman was defenceless.

fore, the workmen found their only strength, and tried to match themselves as a body against the superior economic weight of the master, or group of masters, with whom they had to deal. For the individual bargain they tried to substitute the "collective bargain," which has since become the normal practice in organized industry.

Francis Place's experience as master and journeyman had convinced him that the laws against combination ought to be repealed. He collected evidence from the trade unions and tried to organize them for a



THE LAST OF THE CITY OF LONDON NIGHT WATCHMEN
 Melancholy result of the creation of Peel's new Metropolitan Police.
 From "Political Satires," 1829 (No. 1868-8-8-9c91), in the British Museum.



PAYING FOR THE POLICE
 While Peel, in the uniform of the new police, removes the watch, Wellington picks the citizen's pocket to get money for the police rate.
 From "Political Satires," 1829 (No. 1868-8-8-9073), in the British Museum.

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joint effort to secure an alteration of the law. McCulloch gave journalistic help, making use of information which Place supplied. More important, Joseph Hume took up the question in the House of Commons. In 1824 Huskisson consented to the appointment of a select committee on the laws relating to three subjects, the emigration of artisans, the exports of machinery, and the combination of workmen. Huskisson was interested mainly in the first two, and, whether through artfulness or innocence, Hume seems to have conveyed the impression that he, too, regarded them as of major importance.

Repeal of the Combination Laws

All the subjects seemed dull, members took little interest in them, and Hume found it easy to "pack" the committee, of which he was chairman. Place marshalled the evidence, coached the trade union delegates, and adroitly briefed Hume, who was always supplied with skilfully drawn questions, and with abstracts of the expected answers, as well as with a day-to-day index of the proceedings. The committee reported in favour of a complete removal of the restraints imposed by the combination laws, which were accordingly repealed by parliament "almost without the notice of members within or newspapers without." It is probable that no legislation of such far-reaching importance, not excluding the Stamp Act, has ever been carried with so little fuss or amid more astounding ignorance of what it implied.

Yet Place and Hume had been too clever. In the excitement engendered by such sudden release from an intolerable tyranny, the workmen lost their heads and endangered their own cause. A crop of new trade unions sprang up; others ventured for the first time into the light of day; and the eagerness of their members to make instant use of the newly-won freedom produced an outburst of strikes, often unwise and sometimes indefensible. This was a disappointment even to Place, who had hoped that the removal of restraint would check rather than encourage strikes. But it roused employers to fury. Ministers found themselves assailed on all sides. The prime minister and the lord chancellor declared that they were ignorant

of the repeal and disapproved of it. A new committee was set up, packed this time by the masters.

Hume alone of those who favoured the men was able to get a seat upon the new committee. At first it was intended to take evidence only from selected masters. But Hume, again coached by Place, cross-examined them severely and exposed the weaknesses of their case. The unions, formerly apathetic but now awakened to the gravity of their position, promoted petitions to parliament, which flowed in steadily. Trade union delegates clamorous to give evidence besieged the committee-room and waylaid members with the story of their grievances. At last the committee was forced to hear some of them, and was convinced against its will that the contentions of the men, in part at least, were reasonable. In 1825 a new act, based on the committee's recommendations, forbade combinations in general, but expressly allowed them for securing the regulation of hours of labour or rates of wages. The collective bargain had been accorded, though grudgingly, a legal recognition.

Increasing Zeal for Education

Another sign of a new temper was to be seen in an increasing zeal for education. Cobbett professed to believe that this sprang from the desire to provide an antidote to revolution. "Society," he wrote, "is in a *queer* state when the rich think they must *educate* the poor in order to ensure their *own safety!*"* And it is true that education was coming to be less generally regarded as a device for teaching revolution to the working-classes; though that suspicion is not yet fully exorcised, and probably never will be. Like many other good and fruitful seeds, the seeds of educational progress had been germinating during the long winter sleep of the Napoleonic wars. Sunday schools, begun about 1780 with a religious aim, had taught children, and not infrequently adults, to read the Bible, and sometimes to write. These schools had been rapidly set up all over the country. A witness before Brougham's committee, in 1816, gave it as his opinion that they were "by far the most efficient

* *Rural Rides*, November 17th, 1822.

PLANS FOR POPULAR EDUCATION

way of instructing children; their parents cannot spare them so well on other days, and their attendance is generally better on Sundays." Bamford testified that in Lancashire these schools made it possible for many working men to learn to read.*

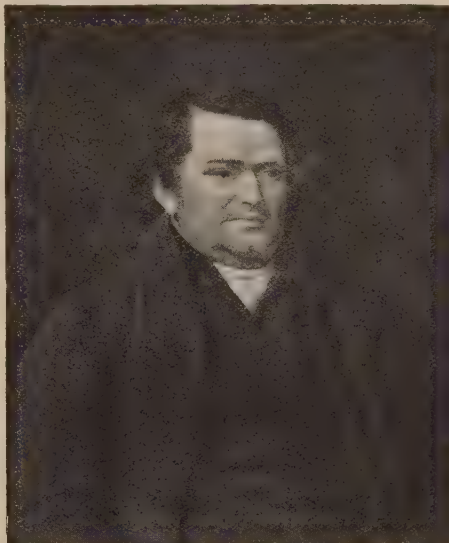
Another impetus to popular education came from a discovery which promised to make it cheap. This was the monitorial system, a plan whereby a single teacher instructed a few bright pupils, each of whom passed on his newly won learning to a squad of his more backward fellows. Various names were given to the "Madras System," because it was first employed in an orphanage in Madras by Dr. Andrew Bell, and the "Lancastrian System," because its first use in England (1798) was due to an original and picturesque but ill-balanced young Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, the plan was popular since it seemed to multiply the teaching power of each master or mistress. Benthamites and Quakers, Nonconformist ministers and a few public men, in odd alliance, founded about 1808 an association to promote popular education on Lancaster's plan, which later became the British and Foreign School Society. In 1811, churchmen, who had already begun to apply Bell's system, founded the National Society for the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church. And to provide adequate teachers both societies were soon forced to maintain training colleges.

These philanthropic efforts only touched the fringe of a national problem. Brougham, who had been interested in the Lancastrian schools, secured the appointment in 1816 of a select committee on "the education of the lower orders of the metropolis." Its report, with the evidence taken, makes melancholy though sometimes amusing reading. The general impression derived from it is that half the children in the metropolis were totally uneducated; of the rest only a small proportion learnt to read with ease, still fewer to write or to "cipher."

Outside London the case was often worse. Nearly a quarter of the parishes of England were without school or schoolmaster. Where

* See the description of a Sunday school in his early days, printed in Dunckey's edition of *Passages in the Life of a Radical*.

schools existed the teachers were seldom even moderately competent. In some places the schools were a temporary accident, dependent perhaps on the zeal of a clergyman, or the bounty of the squire's lady: such schools, for example, as that kept by Lady Baring and described by Cobbett, where the girls were all clad alike in "a camlet gown, white apron and plaid cloak." Another temporary school, Miss Mitford tells us, was kept in her



JOSEPH LANCASTER

From the Painting by J. Hazlitt, in the National Portrait Gallery.

village by teachers who doubled the part with that of "mantua-makers," but gave up the school when they found that clothing the body was more profitable than adorning the mind. Many of the new industrial towns and villages possessed no schools whatever. Conditions in Wales were, if possible, worse than in England, though Scotland, of course, had long been more fortunate.

The plain fact is that popular education had never in England been regarded as part of the nation's business. Some educational provisions had been included in the act promoted by Sir Robert Peel the elder, in 1802, for the preservation of the health and morals of apprentices employed in factories; and this act has sometimes been regarded, in

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consequence, as the first compulsory education act. But its requirements were resented by the manufacturers, and its compulsions were rendered null. Whitbread had tried in his Poor Law Bill of 1807 to provide for a universal system of parish schools, but his bill had been strangled. In 1820 Brougham

of a suspected measure, and the bill had to be withdrawn.

Brougham was defeated but not discouraged. Foiled in one direction he attacked in another. If he could not make education universal he might at least try to make knowledge cheap and accessible. He



JOHN BULL AND WELLINGTON

John Bull is represented complaining to Brougham of Wellington's military spirit displayed in the duel with Anglesey, and asking him to lecture the prime minister.

From "Political Satires," 1829 (No. 1868-8-8-9130), in the British Museum.

introduced an Education Bill which would have provided some sort of school in every parish. But Catholics and Dissenters alike took alarm. They thought, perhaps wrongly—though allowance must be made for the prejudices of the day,—that the bill gave too much power to the village parson and had about it the savour of proselytism. The bill was left with few firm friends but its author. Brougham was never greatly gifted in those arts of conciliation which ease the passage

helped, in 1826, to found the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It was ridiculed then and has been sneered at since. "My house has been nearly burned down," Peacock made Dr. Folliott complain, "by my cook taking it into her head to study hydrostatics in a sixpenny tract published by the Steam Intellect Society"* More justly it has been said that the society confounded useful knowledge with a knowledge of useful

* *Crotchet Castle*, by Thomas Love Peacock (1831).

ADULT EDUCATION AND FINANCIAL REFORM

things. But there can be no doubt that it helped that "march of mind" with which Peacock was out of all patience. It issued popular educational magazines; it made them interesting; and, despite the heavy tax on paper, it made them cheap. People bought them readily, as they also bought the society's *Library of Useful Knowledge*, to which speculative publishers soon paid the compliment of imitation. "The schoolmaster is abroad," said Brougham in 1827, "and I trust more to the schoolmaster armed with his primer than I do to the soldier in full military array."

Foundation of London University

Adult education also began to receive increased attention. In 1823, Dr. Birkbeck, supported by men as dissimilar as Brougham and Place, formed the London Mechanics' Institute, which prospered and became the model for other mechanics' institutes or working-men's colleges in the provinces, such as that founded at Liverpool in 1825. It was also followed in 1825 by the University of London. In this enterprise Brougham again played a leading part, and amongst his helpers were men like George Grote and Zachary Macaulay. As a result of their exertions, University College was opened in 1825. Then, since many churchmen disliked its undenominational character, King's College was incorporated in 1829 as a rival stronghold for the orthodox. From this unfortunate schism many difficulties later arose. When the charter of "London University" was granted in 1835 it established only an examining body. Teaching was left to the rival colleges, and to such others as might subsequently be recognized. But the foundation of the colleges marked a zeal for education which would have been unthinkable only a few years earlier. "Brougham," said Bamford (giving him a monopoly of credit to which he is not fully entitled), "led popular education from the dark and narrow crib where he found it like a young colt saddled and cruelly bitted by ignorance for superstition to ride. He cut the straps from its sides and the bridle from its jaws, and sent it forth strong, beautiful and free."*

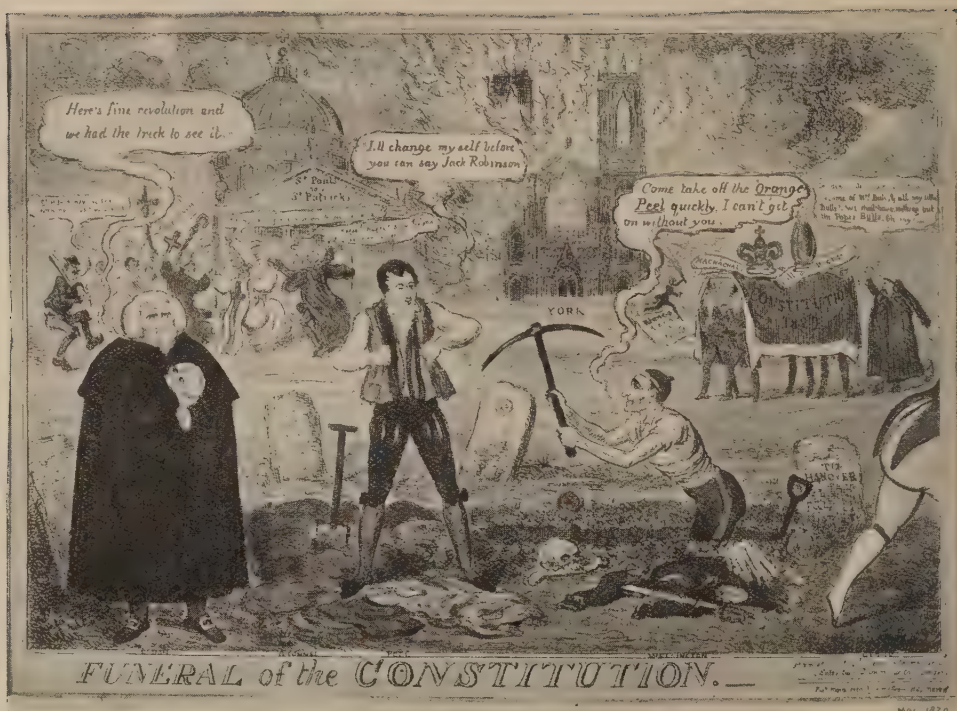
* *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, ii, 15.

Lastly, the period was one of financial reform. Robinson might be, in Gladstone's opinion, "the man who knew least about finance who was ever at the head of the Treasury." But at his elbow was Huskisson, and it is now clear that the financial measures of the Canningites were guided mainly by Huskisson's advice. The old juggle with the sinking fund was abandoned; dear money was no longer borrowed to pay off loans obtained at a cheaper rate; taxation was simplified by lowering imposts of which the burden was out of proportion to the yield.

Reduction of Customs Duties

As with taxes so also with customs duties, which were lowered wherever it seemed possible to get a greater revenue by a reduction in their rate. By accident, for example, a quarter of the tobacco duty was dropped. The accident proved that the reduction was profitable, because it reduced the duty below "smuggling-point"; it rendered smuggling unprofitable, and, as goods hitherto smuggled now paid duty, the revenue receipts were increased. Robinson profited by the lesson, and the duties were further reduced.

It is clear, too, that Canning and Huskisson were moving towards a repeal of the Corn Laws, to which there was now an increasing opposition in the country. Huskisson openly avowed his conversion to repeal in 1826. Creevey described with glee the "rage of the Old Tory High-fliers at the liberal jaw of Canning and Huskisson," and "the fury of both Whig and Tory landholders at the admission of foreign corn," which they denounced as "a breaking-down of the Corn Laws." Industrial necessity was, in fact, forcing the country towards a simpler tariff and the removal of trade restrictions. Overseas trade was also much simplified by the partial abrogation of the Navigation Laws. Shipowners who were at first inclined to resent the removal of restrictions on foreigners were soon reconciled to the change when they found it profitable. Finally, Robinson could claim credit for making the national accounts simpler and more intelligible.



CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

Consequences predicted by Protestant opponents. While Wellington and Peel dig the grave of the constitution, George IV leaves for Hanover, O'Connell leads the pope into St. Paul's, and York Minster is burnt.

From "Political Satires," 1829, in the British Museum.

CHAPTER IV

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION AND THE FALL OF THE TORIES (1828-30)

IT was the strange fortune of the moderate Tory ministry formed in 1828 by Wellington and Peel that, both in home and in foreign affairs, it had to solve problems linked with the name of Canning—Catholic emancipation and the liberation of Greece. Almost in spite of itself it solved both, finding itself driven by the pressure of events into measures which it did not love but could not escape. Greek affairs had already reached a crisis. Ibrahim Pasha and the army of Egypt had refused to respect the armistice which Russia, France and England had demanded by the Treaty of London.

Ibrahim's troops had been more cruel and more violent than before. They had ravaged the Morea, slaying the inhabitants and leaving a barren and a blackened ruin behind them as they passed. By order of the allies the admirals of the three powers had commanded Ibrahim to stay his hand. The order had been ignored, and the admirals had determined to enforce it.

Ibrahim's headquarters were at Navarino; his fleet lay in the historic bay famous for the contest between the Spartans and Athenians for Pylos and Sphacteria. Led by Codrington, the British admiral, the

RECOGNITION OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

allied commanders determined to blockade Ibrahim's forces. On October 20th, 1827, the three fleets entered the harbour, in part as a show of force, in part to immobilize Ibrahim's fleet. Codrington wished to avoid battle if possible, though he was prepared for it if necessary. Ibrahim foolishly opened fire, and in a few hours his fleet was only a memory.

Battle of Navarino

Navarino was, and still is, the subject of controversies which cannot be examined here. The Greeks were delighted. "Greece lives again! What glory for this century and for Christian kings!" wrote one of their warmest supporters, the Princess Lieven, wife of the Russian ambassador in London.* Navarino gave fresh heart to the Greeks and dismayed the enemies of their independence. Metternich called it "a terrible catastrophe."† But it created a difficult situation, for nominally at least England was not at war with the Turk. We had, as Palmerston sarcastically remarked, "made a bonfire of the fleet of our good ally at Navarino," yet "this was not a declaration of war, but only a slight act of remonstrance, struck parenthetically into unbroken friendship,"‡ There was a Turkish as well as a Greek party in England: even the Duke of Clarence—the future William IV—"although full of pride for the battle of Navarino, which he thinks," says the Princess Lieven, "was won by himself, is nevertheless at heart wildly philo-Turk. You can hardly believe how many English are of the same way of thinking."§ The Wellington ministry was itself too lukewarm in the cause of Greece to insist upon the immediate enforcement of the Treaty of London, and it seemed for a moment as if the fruits of Canning's diplomacy and of Ibrahim's folly might be lost to Greece.

Fortunately for the Greeks, a further disaster befell the Turks. An independent quarrel between Russia and the Porte led to a war, in which the Russians were victorious. Constantinople was threatened, and the Turks were compelled to accept the Treaty

of Adrianople (September, 1829), whereby the Russians strengthened their position in the Balkans and Greek independence was recognized. In fact, the Greeks did better than they had expected, for even the limited suzerainty of the Turk, to which they would still have been subject if the provisions of the Treaty of London had been carried out, was now abolished.

Greece was free at last, but it had still no settled government. In 1827 it had found a temporary president in Capodistrias, an Island Greek who had taken service with the tsar and had gained great experience as one of his chief advisers. Full of vigour, zeal and patriotism, Capodistrias was not, however, universally popular in Greece, possibly because he had been used to a centralized despotism and had tried to apply, in the internal affairs of the liberated provinces, the administrative methods of the only system with which he was really familiar. In England he was well known and popular, but other powers suspected that he was a tool of the tsar.

The Greek Throne

The powers therefore decided that if Greece was to be independent a prince must rule over it, and they looked for a nominee who would command general confidence. The throne was offered to Prince Leopold, widower of the Princess Charlotte. But though there was to be an independent Greece it was to be an exceedingly restricted one; large and important districts which, by tradition and speech, should have formed part of it, were to be outside its borders, and the frontier planned for it was undoubtedly bad. Leopold hesitated. Metternich, with unusual frankness, said that Leopold "must be stung by a tarantula" to wish for the place. "To reign over emptiness is a dreary occupation." But Leopold's prospect was still worse, for Greece was "full of all kinds of disorder."|| Unable to secure from the powers those concessions which he deemed essential to success in the organization of the new state, Leopold rejected the offer of the Greek crown. Later in life, when plagued by the difficulties besetting the

* *Letters*, p. 111. † To Apponyi, *Memoirs*, iv, 418.

‡ *Melbourne Papers*, p. 108. § *Letters*, p. 121.

|| *Memoirs*, iv, 623 (note).

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Belgian throne, to which he was soon afterwards called, Leopold was sometimes tempted to question the wisdom of his decision. Yet he had diagnosed (with his accustomed shrewdness) some of the weaknesses of the Greek position, and cannot be blamed for refusing to place himself in a situation in which he thought success to be impossible.

without Thessaly, Epirus or Crete. Otho's task was far from easy, for the Greeks were difficult to govern. Yet some good observers thought that they could see beneath the surface of the sordid, grasping, quarrelsome character of the liberated Greeks the promise of a higher development. "*Mind, the genius is still there,*" wrote Cobden, after a



BATTLE OF NAVARINO

From the Engraving by S. W. Reynolds and Sixdenniers, after the Painting by J. C. Langlois, in the Portfolio of Naval History (1859-7-9-1580), in the British Museum.

Had Canning lived to carry out his own policy the result might have been different; but Wellington had not Canning's sympathy with Greek aspirations, and the problem was not solved until after the fall of the Wellington ministry, if indeed it is solved yet. For a moment it seemed as if Capodistrias might exchange the direction of a provisional government for the presidency of a Greek republic. But in October, 1831, he was assassinated, and the powers renewed their search for a suitable prince. In February, 1833, they found their man in Otho of Bavaria, who was given a frontier slightly better than had been offered to Leopold, though Greece was still

visit to Greece, four years later; "the raw material of all that is noble, brilliant, refined and glorious is still latent in the character of this people: overlaid, as is natural, with the cunning, falsehood, meanness, and other vices inherent in the spirit of slaves"—the inevitable consequence of long subjection to alien masters.

With the demand for Catholic emancipation Wellington had even less sympathy than with the struggle for Greek independence, but he was able, with Peel's advice, to handle the problem created by it with statesman-

* To F. Cobden, April 18th, 1837: Morley's *Cobden*, iii, 81.

POLITICAL DISABILITIES OF CATHOLICS

like generosity. Although the movement for Catholic relief was closely intertwined with the more general agitation for reform in Great Britain, it was mainly, though not wholly, an Irish movement. The disabilities of English Catholics were more widespread; they could neither vote at an election nor show their qualities of leadership in war; yet the pressure of their grievances was modified by the more urbane setting of English life and politics, by the absence of those daily irritations which accentuated the sense of grievance in Ireland, and by the fact that their disabilities were those of a minority not otherwise unprosperous or ungenerously treated.

In Ireland the grievance was that of an overwhelming majority discontented with the form and spirit of the administration, who regarded the exclusion of Catholics from Westminster as the stamp of inferiority placed upon a subject people by their alien masters. The bitterness of the struggle was exacerbated by social and racial as well as by religious differences, and by the puzzled incapacity of English men for dealing with the problems of Irish government. English statesmen confessed, in moments of frankness, that Ireland was beyond their understanding. "In truth," Liverpool had written to Peel in 1816, "Ireland is a political phenomenon not influenced by the same feelings as appear to affect mankind in other countries." It was this half-understood pressure from Ireland which gave life and vigour to the demand for Catholic emancipation.

The Relief Act of 1793 had been no disinterested measure, but it had removed every substantial grievance of the rank and file of Irish Catholics. It gave the franchise on easy terms—possibly, as some argued, on terms that were as dangerous as they were

deceptively easy, for the boon was far less effectual than it might have been if it had been accompanied by a reform of the corrupt and ill-arranged system of parliamentary representation. Irish Catholics had been admitted to practise at the bar, and a



WELLINGTON AS PRIME MINISTER

From "Caricatures," May 29, 1829 (No. 1868-8-8-8991), in the British Museum.

serious barrier against the professional advancement of the educated class had thereby been removed. But Catholics were still excluded from parliament and from the honours of the law. "The extension of the elective franchise to men who were at the same time declared to be ineligible to sit in parliament, and the admission of Catholics to the bar while they were denied its honourable rewards, are conspicuous instances of

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impolicy," wrote a prominent advocate of emancipation; "it was imprudent," he added, quoting the words of a Whig leader, "to allow Roman Catholics to enter the race of intelligence and yet shut up the goal." But the grievance was more than an exasperating barrier against the educated few; it deprived the uneducated many of their

of a stable British ministry, however well ministers might be supported on other questions in the House of Commons.

Grattan had much to encourage him: the sympathy of Canning and Castlereagh, leaders of the rival wings of the Tory party; the support of Tierney, a leader of the opposition, and of the almost Radical Brougham; of Mackintosh, the Whig philosopher, and of Croker, the Tory reviewer; and, not least, the help of William Wilberforce, the repository of the Pitt tradition, and himself the most respected and independent figure in political life. In the black year of 1819 Grattan had led his forces to within sight of victory. Even after Grattan's death in 1820 had deprived his followers of their veteran general, they were not left to carry on the battle without powerful support. Grattan's successor, William Conyngham Plunket, the greatest of Irish orators, became a member of the government in 1821, and in 1823 he introduced, though he failed to carry, a new Relief Bill. Despite the number, variety and influence of their supporters, the advocates of emancipation were always baulked of the desired reform when it came to the final test.

Before the Irish Catholics could make decided progress they had to find new and more daring leaders. They found them in two barristers, Daniel O'Connell and Richard Lalor Sheil. O'Connell was a Catholic of good family, in his early youth "almost a Tory," who had sprung into prominence at the age of twenty-five as an opponent of the Union. Witty, eloquent and courageous, he was an astute politician and an orator who could sway vast multitudes. The foundations of his popularity were laid in the courts, for he was a skilful "stealer of verdicts," and he learnt, by practising upon juries, those arts of persuasion which gave him an undisputed mastery over great audiences. His flexible, many-cadenced voice charmed his listeners: he had the rare gift of perfectly anticipating their thought, as well as an instinctive sympathy with their feelings. Such gifts have their perils. At the worst the orator may become a sort of Æolian harp, vibrating in sympathy with every passing wind of feeling that stirs the passions of the crowd. Here lies the explanation of some



DANIEL O'CONNELL

From the Miniature by B. Mulrenin, in the National Portrait Gallery.

natural political leaders, the Catholic gentry and professional men.

Many Irish Catholics had acquiesced in the Act of Union because they believed that it was to be followed at once by their admission to parliament. When this part of Pitt's policy was thwarted, and when, giving up the battle, he resigned office, Catholic disabilities took rank as an Irish grievance and became a burning question in English politics. Grattan transferred his struggle for the Catholic claims from St. Stephen's Green to the floor of the House of Commons, and for a generation the controversy became a disturbing and an unhealthy influence in English political life. It made the Liverpool ministry an armed camp. On Liverpool's retirement it broke up the Tory party, and made almost impossible the formation

'Tis all vel at Vindsor.

Does Javry mean to start on his own account? Them leaders seem to have it all their own way,



The Slap-up Swell wot drives when hever he likes.

ACHILLES.

Ready to start, your Honour.



The Man wot drives the Sovereign.

ORANGE PE-L.

He made each felley turn his coat, And caught each rat by the tail.



The Cad to the Man wot drives the Sovereign.

THE CUNNING HEN

I says to our Governor, says I, Keep your eye on them 'ere leaders, George, or they'll bolt with the coach.



The Guard wot looks after the Sovereign.

"PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS FOR THE NEW PLAY OF 'THE ROAD TO ROYALTY'"

Caricatures of George IV, Wellington, Peel and Lady Conyngham.

From "Political Satires," 1829 (No. 1868-8-2-8969), in the British Museum.

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of O'Connell's rhetorical extravagances, for he was not exempt from the defect of his quality. But at their best, devoted to noble causes and guided by deep human sympathies, gifts like O'Connell's may be the instruments of great reforms and may uplift a whole people.

Sheil was O'Connell's chief-of-staff, more

to an unexpected and discordant shriek. He was conscious of his own defects—they are described as vividly as O'Connell's splendours in one of Sheil's own essays*—but they were defects of nature which were beyond his power to cure. Yet O'Connell owed much to this almost forgotten second who has been overshadowed by the greater glories of his chief.

After the failure of opposition to the Union, O'Connell had framed the policy to which he devoted his life. Put shortly, it was to press for the complete equality of religion before the law and the restoration of an independent parliament to Ireland. Two factors in Irish life worked powerfully in his favour when he began the formation of a popular party to further his aims. One was the national feeling of the priesthood. Before the French Revolution priests had been trained abroad, they had been in imperfect touch with the peasantry, they had been recruited mainly from the comfortable classes, and, so far as they had been political, which was little, their sympathies had been aristocratic rather than popular. But since the revolution a new generation had arisen, recruited largely from the peasantry and in sympathy with it, Irish in education and outlook, and keenly interested in politics. The new priesthood furnished O'Connell with a corps of officers ready to command in the new campaign.

In the second place, the economic misery of the peasantry was growing more acute. In the absence of any large industry alternative to agriculture, the pressure of an increased population, dependent on the land, was persistently narrowing the exiguous margin between subsistence and starvation, and lowering the standard of life. Economic distress provided here, as always, the raw material for political discontent to work upon. Individually the Irish landlords, when they were resident and known to their tenantry, were respected and even revered. But the pressure of want inclined the mass of Irishmen to listen to new leaders. They felt, and rightly, that the wide franchise of 1793 placed in their hands a political weapon which ought to procure for them some redress of

* *Sketches*, ii, 200-1.



JOHN BULL IN DOUBT OF WELLINGTON'S POLICY

From the Engraving by Robert Cruikshank in "Political Satires," April, 1829 (No. 1868-8-8-8-8974), in the British Museum.

versatile, though less commanding, than his leader. A barrister in moderate practice, he was also a poet, a successful dramatist, and something more than a clever journalist, for a substantial portion of his periodical writings can still be read with interest and pleasure. He had a splendid though not a ready gift of oratory. There are speeches of Sheil's that can be read to-day with greater admiration and less impatience than many of O'Connell's. But they were less effective. Physically Sheil was not impressive, and his voice had an unpleasant shrillness, which rose at times

IRISH AGITATION FOR CATHOLIC RELIEF

grievances, if they could find the leaders who would teach them to use it. But they were not hopeful. When O'Connell's agitation began they were in the depths of depression. They had to be roused. They had to hear the call that would inspire them with fresh courage before they could renew the struggle for political power. That struggle had been often begun with high hopes, and too often abandoned in defeat and despair. Or again, when apparent success had crowned the efforts of Irish leaders, and when concessions had been hardly won from an unwilling government, their victories had too often ended only in the memory of a faith-destroying cheat, since the boon had proved, through some defect, to be illusory or vain.

These conditions, taken together with his temperament as an orator, help to explain the exaggeration of much of O'Connell's language and the violence with which his campaign was conducted. O'Connell justified his extravagances as necessary to give confidence to a broken and dispirited people. So far as the Irish people were concerned his policy was successful. They returned him reverence for courage, confidence for devotion. Sheil describes how, in a great public meeting in London, Irish faces "were raised towards the glory of Ireland with a mixed expression of wonder and of love."*

New Movement in Ireland

Earlier agitations for Catholic Emancipation had been the work of an intellectual aristocracy, mainly and of necessity Protestant. The new movement was broader and more popular, and its leaders were Catholics. Its strength and its weakness lay in the wide appeal which made it more nearly national in Ireland, whilst at the same time it alienated moderate opinion in England, where victory had ultimately to be registered. But so long as Grattan lived, and so long as the hope of parliamentary success was constantly renewed, the popular agitation organized by O'Connell did not seem to be a factor of the first importance in the political situation. Even in 1821, when George IV visited Ireland and was received

with something like enthusiasm, the old hopes were revived, and the visit was interpreted as a sign of impending concessions.

The Catholic Rent

When these hopes were disappointed, and when it was seen that the Protestant party was organizing itself in Orange lodges which no legislation could suppress, a number of Dublin lawyers, led by O'Connell and supported by a few Catholic peers, formed the Catholic Association, which provided itself with ample funds by means of a voluntary levy, willingly paid, and known as the Catholic Rent. The association provided a rallying centre for the Catholic party, and it alarmed the enemies of emancipation. Ministers feared it, for it seemed to establish a state within the State. But it flourished despite all attempts to crush it, and ministers felt compelled to attempt to suppress it by a special act. The association was nominally dissolved. But the lawyers of the association were too clever for the lawyers of the Crown. They formed a new society with the plausible and legal aims of charity and education; they continued to levy the Catholic Rent, under a new name, with the professed object of relieving the distresses of the forty-shilling freeholders. Repression, therefore, had failed. But it had revived that distrust of the honesty of English law and that want of faith in English ministers which have always been the bane of relations between England and Ireland and have embittered every political discussion.

None the less, the cause of emancipation made progress in England. It won new and powerful friends like "honest Jack Althorp," who was rising to a position of leadership amongst the Whigs. Joseph Hume, always happy when there was any scandal to be exposed, attacked the abuses of the Irish Church. In 1825 Sir Francis Burdett nearly carried a measure of relief. His bill was accompanied by two safeguards, known as "the wings," one to appease each party of extremists: a Clergy Support Bill, to endow the priesthood with a quarter of a million pounds from the public funds, which would, it was thought, conciliate the Catholics; and an Elective Franchise Bill, substituting a

* May, 1825, *Sketches*, ii, 47.

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ten-pound freehold for the forty-shilling freehold qualification, in order to calm the fears of Protestants.

Strong arguments could be adduced in favour of both these "safeguards." Though Catholic opinion had long been divided on the question of State endowment, Burdett's bill passed the Commons, and even Peel regarded the matter as settled. But in the Lords the "wings" proved inadequate as a means of levitation. The Duke of York came down to reinforce the thunders of its opponents, threatening to resist the bill, "whatever his station," which was taken to mean that if, as then seemed likely, he were to succeed his brother on the throne, he would refuse, as his father had done, to assent to any new measure of Catholic relief. The bill was rejected by a majority of forty-eight in circumstances which seemed to invite external pressure as the only means of extorting reasonable concessions from a reluctant Crown and a prejudiced peerage. "God be thanked," wrote George IV in his folly; and the extreme Tories rejoiced with him.

Demand for Reform in England

Meantime the demand for parliamentary reform was growing in England. Year by year the new urban population increased in numbers and the industrial middle classes grew in strength. Manufacturing industry bore an increasing share of national expenditure, yet from the control of it masters and men were alike debarred. Scarcely a year passed without some fresh evidence of bribery and corruption or without some new electoral scandal being brought to light. The discredit of the old system increased at the very time that the pressure of economic and social change was threatening its existence. Responsible Whigs like Lord John Russell, who distrusted Burdett and his fellow-reformers as "wild and visionary," became convinced of the need for reform and made strenuous efforts to secure it.

Four months after the formation of Wellington's government, opinion in favour of reform had grown to such strength that a difference on one of its minor issues threatened to destroy the ministry from

within, and precipitated a decision on the Catholic claims. It had been decided to disfranchise the rotten borough of East Retford for gross corruption. Huskisson wanted the seats so liberated to be transferred to one of the great unrepresented towns. Others were of opinion that the constituency should be "thrown into the hundred"—meaning that it should be enlarged by the addition of part of the county, but retain its representation, though on the county franchise—an arrangement whereby nothing would have been done to redress the balance of the representation and an opportunity would have been lost of meeting the grievances of the industrial towns.

Resignation of Huskisson

Misunderstanding arose as to the decision of the cabinet. As a result Peel and Huskisson found themselves in opposite lobbies when a vote was taken in the Commons, and Peel's view prevailed. Huskisson rather hastily offered his resignation. When it was accepted, with equal haste, by Wellington, four of the Canningite ministers resigned with their old colleague. Peel was, as it happened, himself on the point of resignation, for the ministry had just been heavily defeated on Catholic Emancipation. But he saw no feasible alternative to a Wellington ministry, and as the secession of the Canningites involved an extensive remodelling of the government, his own retirement at the same moment would probably have broken it up. Rather unwillingly, for he had lost sympathy with the anti-Catholic Tories, he agreed to remain. One of the changes in the ministry involved a by-election in Ireland. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald became president of the board of trade and had to offer himself for re-election in County Clare.

The contest for Clare hastened the crisis and coloured the atmosphere in which emancipation was carried. But emancipation would have been carried, and carried speedily, if the Clare election had never been fought. Peel, as his *Memoirs* and his correspondence show, had come to believe, even before the formation of the Wellington ministry, that emancipation was inevitable. Two events had since confirmed his opinion. First, the

O'CONNELL AND THE CLARE ELECTION

Catholics had been encouraged by the relief afforded to Dissenters by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The argument against this measure, "for a popular assembly like the House of Commons," Peel had found to be "threadbare in the extreme."* He had, therefore, used the full weight of his influence with the bishops to secure for it a smooth passage through the House of Lords, and he had himself proposed the colourless promise not to injure the establishment which had been substituted for the old test. "I thought," he says in his *Memoirs*, "that . . . an eager yet unavailing opposition, or even a sullen neutrality or grudging and extorted consent, would deprive concession of all its grace."†

Peel had not been able to enforce this opinion—of its wisdom there is now no room for doubt—without a severe struggle or without alienating some of his friends. He felt his position as a party leader to be an uneasy one. There were whispers of betrayal and he was unwilling to incur a second time the reproach of surrendering the privileges of the Church. Though emancipation needs must come, he doubted if it would be a good thing for him to carry it.

Conversion of Peel

The other event which had confirmed Peel in the opinion that concession could not be long delayed was the success of a motion by Sir Francis Burdett on May 8th, 1828, for a Commons committee with a view to "a final and conciliatory adjustment" of the Catholic claims. The majority was only six; but Peel had spoken against the resolution, and the vote was therefore a defeat of the ministry. Peel was convinced that the time for unrelenting opposition was past. He would have resigned immediately after his defeat if Huskisson's resignation had not then endangered the ministry. But it is important to realize that Wellington and Peel already believed that the question must be resolved, and that only the time and the manner of settlement remained to be decided. At the

moment Peel was overwhelmed with work and felt too busy to think out a plan; but the question was only postponed until he could find leisure in the vacation to give the problem his calm consideration.

Candidature of O'Connell

The Clare election made this postponement impossible. O'Connell had already revealed his strength at the polls during the election of 1826. He had routed the Beresfords, the most powerful family of the old ascendancy, on their own ground at Waterford. At Louth his candidate had defeated a leading ministerialist, Mr. Leslie Foster, after an exciting contest. "It was a choice," said Sheil, "between the distress warrant and the Cross."‡ And the Cross had triumphed. Encouraged by these successes the Catholics had declared that in future they would oppose any candidate who refused to pledge himself against the ministry. Fitzgerald was, however, an awkward candidate for them to oppose. No stronger representative of the ministry could have been found. He was a good and popular landlord, with property in Clare. He inherited a name that was honoured even among O'Connell's own supporters, for his father had resigned office in order to vote against the Union. And he was himself an avowed and generous supporter of emancipation. His only crime was that he was a Wellingtonian and a member of the proscribed ministry.

If O'Connell could beat Fitzgerald he could beat anybody. But hitherto he had perforce chosen his candidates from his Protestant supporters. Now he was in a quandary, for it was not easy to find a Protestant emancipationist who was not merely strong enough to oppose Fitzgerald but was also willing to fight a popular gentleman with whom he did not disagree. For such a candidate O'Connell hunted in vain. But he was pledged to opposition, and oppose Fitzgerald he must. At last he decided to stand himself. He went so far, even, as to assert that he was not only eligible as the law then stood, but that he could sit and vote in the House of Commons without taking the

* To the Bishop of Oxford, February 19th, 1828: *Memoirs*, i, 66.

† *Ibid.*, ii, 69.

‡ Parker's *Peel*, i, 410; Sheil's *Sketches*, i, 167-82.

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oaths to which Roman Catholics objected. And this was so far true that no test prevented his going to the poll. The obstacle which debarred him from sitting and voting in parliament was the oath required of

archy. The priests "opposed the spell of religion to the spell of feudalism—the traditions of the chapel to the traditions of the hall."* The proceedings "were those of madmen," Fitzgerald reported to Peel;

"but the country is mad."† He "polled all the gentry, and all the fifty-pound freeholders—the gentry to a man." But outside of his own tenants and a few of those of one other landlord, he secured no votes from the peasantry.‡ Priests marched their flocks to the poll, where they voted solidly for O'Connell. Fitzgerald did his best, but he was beaten by nearly two to one, and thought himself lucky to have done no worse. Yet he improved his position in the county in everything but votes, and made an impression even upon Sheil and O'Connell.§ This is proof, if proof were needed, that nobody could have put up a better fight, or emerged from the contest with greater credit. More important, it is proof also that Clare was only a beginning, and that if the election had not precipitated emancipation, all other Catholic counties would, at the first opportunity, have followed the lead of Clare.

O'Connell was returned by the sheriff with the statement that he had declared himself a Roman Catholic. A bitter contest for his right to sit in parliament confronted the ministry—a Wilkes case not merely with a county but with a country behind it. A dissolution offered

the only chance of escape; and that way lay almost certain disaster. It would yield as many Clares as there were Catholic counties. In "such an ignited country,"||



EXCLUSION OF O'CONNELL

O'Connell, elected for Clare, 1828, was excluded from the House of Commons until he had been re-elected on the passing of Catholic Emancipation, 1829.

From "Political Satires," May 26, 1829 (No. 1868-8-8-8988), in the British Museum.

members on their introduction to the House of Commons.

O'Connell, Sheil and others gave to the astonished peasantry of Clare one of those oratorical feasts which are dear to the hearts of Irishmen. Priests spoke for O'Connell from the pulpit; circular letters in his favour were read at the altar. As at Louth, it was a battle between the priests and the squire-

* Lecky, *Leaders of Public Opinion*, p. 240.

† Peel's *Memoirs*, i, 109.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

§ Sheil's *Sketches*, ii, 145.

|| W. Gregory to Peel, June 27th, 1828: Peel's *Memoirs*, i, 110.

REMOVAL OF CATHOLIC GRIEVANCES

as an Irish civil servant called it, the risk was too great to be lightly taken.

In his own mind Peel had already decided that emancipation must be carried—that there could, indeed, be no good government in England until this question had ceased to perplex every political issue. Wellington and Peel agreed that the ministry must propose a relief act. But Peel, already suspect among the sterner Tories on account of what they called his surrender to the Dissenters, had no wish to be the chief sponsor of a measure which he had vigorously opposed throughout his political career. He told Wellington that he would resign and would champion the bill from the back benches. Wellington argued that he would have to conquer the opposition of king, lords and Church, and that he could not master it alone.* If the difficulties were to be surmounted Peel must take charge of the bill in the Commons. And settled the question must be, as even Eldon, the most extreme opponent of concession, frankly admitted in his private correspondence. "The rejection of

* Cf. *Peel Papers*, ii, 78.



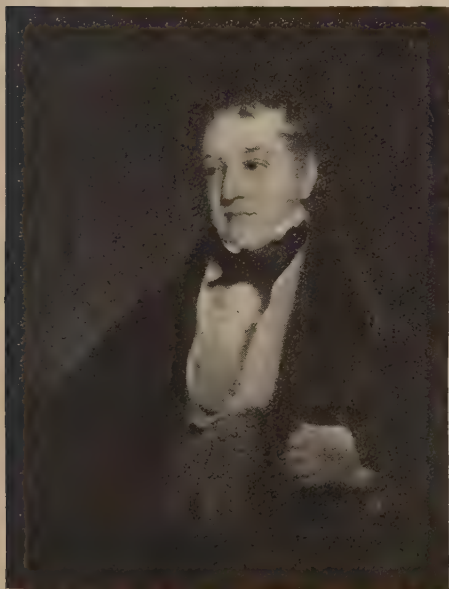
JOHN CHARLES, THIRD EARL SPENCER

From the Chalk Drawing by Charles Turner, in the National Portrait Gallery.

O'Connell from the Commons," Eldon wrote, "may excite rebellion in Ireland"; and the Clare election must bring the Roman Catholic question "to a crisis and a conclusion."

Peel agreed to remain in the ministry and to bring forward the measure of Roman Catholic relief. But the ministerial plans were endangered at the last moment by the opposition of the king, who did not, in Wellington's opinion, "care a farthing" about the principle, yet felt obliged to make some show of resisting a measure which his father had so strenuously opposed.† Peel, Wellington and Lyndhurst resigned. The king reflected that he could not form a more "Protestant" but only a less "Protestant" ministry without them. He gave way and they returned. Once Peel had undertaken the task of meeting the Catholic grievances he was determined that, so far as the decision lay with him, the work should be done well and once for all. His bill made the fewest possible exceptions. Catholics were to be excluded from the viceroyalty, from the chancellorship in England and in Ireland,

† Greville, i, 101.



WILLIAM HUSKISSON

From the Painting by R. Rothwell, in the National Portrait Gallery.

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and from the control of ecclesiastical patronage. But otherwise the removal of religious disqualifications was to be as complete as possible: "Peel's bill," said O'Connell, who had denounced Grattan's as "rascally," "is good—very good; frank, direct, complete." Yet the bill was accompanied by "safeguards," and was marred by mistakes, the necessary concessions to bigotry, without which it could not have been carried.

Irish Franchise Changes

Before the bill passed the Commons the New Catholic Association had voluntarily dissolved. Indeed, O'Connell never showed his power with more convincing force than when he kept his followers quiet at this crisis, and persuaded them to disband the association. Yet its dissolution was formally enacted only after it had taken place. Further, a separate act abolished the franchise of 1793 and substituted a ten-pound freehold for the forty-shilling qualification. Peel, perhaps rightly, thought this wise in itself, for he regarded the forty-shilling franchise as "an infernal curse," the root of many Irish ills.* But in politics things good in themselves are not always happy in their results; and the raising of the franchise opened the door to a new agitation. Whatever may be thought of these two precautions, it has to be remembered that they were necessary to ease the passage of the main relief act. The words of that act also banished from the United Kingdom "every Jesuit and every member of any other religious order, community or society of the Church of Rome bound by monastic or religious vows." This enactment, which does not apply to religious orders of women, has never been enforced.

Finally, the relief act was not made retrospective. O'Connell had, therefore, to secure re-election for Clare before he could sit in the Commons. Perhaps it might have been wiser to frame the act so as to spare him this indignity. But *ex post facto* legislation is usually bad. In this case the ministry could not easily admit that it had passed an act, in the teeth of violent opposition from some of its own friends, to make legal some-

thing that had been legal before.† And the exclusion was more formal than real, for O'Connell was easily re-elected.

When all is fairly weighed it will be reckoned to the credit of Peel and Wellington that the act was so thoroughgoing. Eldon, who was ever a fighter, might recognize in private that the act was unavoidably necessary, but in public he beat the drum ecclesiastic and did his formidable best to defeat the measure by exciting religious prejudice against it. "The king was hostile," said Peel, "the Church was hostile, a majority probably of the people of Great Britain was hostile to concession."‡ It is even doubtful whether the business could have been as well done after the reform of parliament as before it. Gladstone believed long afterwards that the reformed House of Commons would not have been as readily guided by its leaders as its unreformed predecessor; and as an illustration of popular prejudice he quoted the opinion of his Oxford scout that "if the king took an oath at his baptism he ought to hold by it"—a distorted and amusing echo of Eldonian sophistry.

O'Connell's New Campaign

The strength and variety of the prejudices which the measure excited must be borne in mind when its defects are examined. Its worst flaws were the price of success: for it was only by concession and conciliation that Peel and Wellington were able to steer the delicate craft through the shoals of opposition into the safe harbour of the royal assent. The bill passed the Commons at the end of March and the Lords early in April; it received the royal assent on April 13th, 1829. The long struggle was over. But "the worst of it was that the fools were right." The act that was to bring peace to Ireland produced scarcely a lull in Irish agitation. Almost before it was realized that the long controversy was at an end, O'Connell had begun a new campaign for the re-enfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders and for the repeal of the Act of Union.

Wellington and Peel had performed a great

* *Peel Papers*, i, 222; but cf. Creevey, ii, 198.

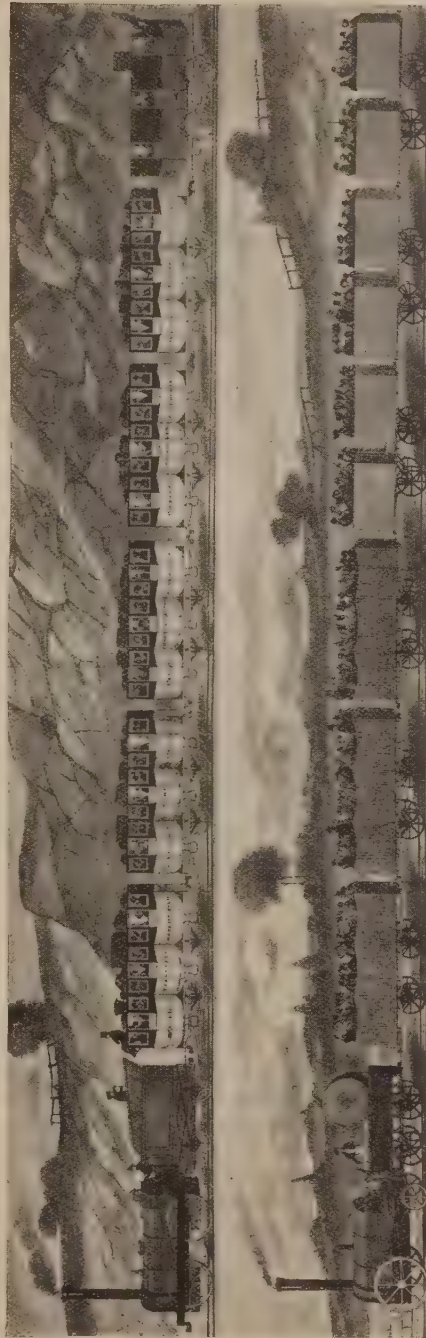
† For Peel's defence, see *Parker's Peel*, ii, 85.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii, 85.

WEAKNESS OF WELLINGTON'S MINISTRY

feat of political courage, but they had fatally weakened a crumbling ministry. The successive concessions to Protestant dissenters and to Roman Catholics had enraged a strong section of their own supporters which long nursed its resentment. The force of this hostility, which was directed against Peel rather than Wellington, may be measured by Peel's loss of his seat for the University of Oxford. When he had decided to bring forward the bill for Catholic Emancipation, he had thought it his duty to submit himself to his constituents. He had resigned, had offered himself for re-election, and had been decisively rejected. A seat was found for him in the rotten borough of Westbury, but even there animosity had followed him and he was not returned without difficulty. In considering the weakness and fall of Toryism, it must be remembered that henceforth it was a party bitterly divided against itself, in which old friends and colleagues were sundered by mutual mistrust.

Nor were religious differences the only cause of ministerial weakness. On financial questions the government had been assailed both by protectionists and by free traders. And here again it had been divided against itself. Wellington had been for maintaining the protective system and Huskisson had wished to modify it. Peel was already beginning to abandon the extreme protectionist position. The ministry had tried to satisfy the protectionists by a slight increase of the corn duties, and to placate the financial reformers by rigorous economy and by some remission of indirect taxation. It had been repeatedly in difficulties on financial questions; and Huskisson's resignation had deprived it of its most enlightened adviser in these controversies. The secession of Huskisson and his friends had also robbed it of debating strength which it could ill spare in face of an improving opposition. Its dependence



EARLY TRAVELLING ON THE LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY

(Upper) Train with first-class carriages and the mails. (Lower) Train with second-class carriages for outside passengers.
From Drawings by T. T. Burry, and published in "Coloured Views of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway" (1831), in the British Museum.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

on Peel's skill in leadership and debate grew daily more apparent. His absence meant the difference between victory and defeat. This was shown more than once during his absences at Drayton in his father's last illness. "He left us," wrote Croker, "not only without a general to lead us, but without one fighting man, for he is himself our host."*

government than it had ever been (save during the short period when the Whigs held office) since the Whig party had been rent in twain by the quarrel between Burke and Fox.

Reform had at last become the chief plank in the Whig platform. Between 1821 and 1829 Lord John Russell had made annual



"TAKING IN WATER AT PARKSIDE," LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY, 1831

It was at this station Huskisson was killed in 1830.

From the Aquatint by H. Pyall, after the Drawing by T. T. Bury, in "Coloured Views of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway" (1831).

In 1830 the opposition found a new leader in "Honest Jack," Lord Althorp, and at once became more effective. Althorp was not brilliant. Many of his followers had better abilities, greater knowledge, and more readiness in debate—Brougham and Lord John Russell, the fascinating but erratic Lambton, and Sir James Graham, with his mastery of detail. But Althorp was a man of judgment and of commanding common-sense. He had character and the high gift of leadership. Under his guidance the opposition became a greater menace to the

attempts to carry reform resolutions, and, though he had never achieved success, reform had now become the dominant political question of the day. The passage of the Catholic Relief Act had cleared the stage and helped to narrow the issue as between the contending parties. And by far the greater weight of ability, especially among younger politicians, was now on the reforming side. If the Tories could have closed their ranks, sunk personal differences, and given to Wellington and Peel the loyal support that was their due, their fight against reform might still have been unsuccessful, but it

* *Peel Papers*, ii, 151.

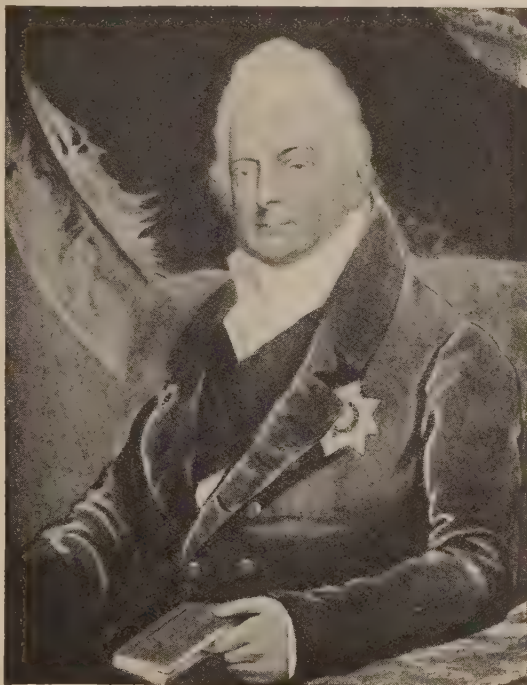
RAILWAYS, ROADS AND CANALS

would have been much more effective and it might have modified profoundly the course and character of the struggle. As it was, the conditions to which British politicians had been long accustomed were now seen to be reversed. Instead of a united ministry winning easy triumphs over the divided Whigs, a united opposition confronted the divided Tories. The ministry's only hope of renewing its strength lay in winning back the Canningites. But in 1830 the Canningites lost their leader, Huskisson, who was killed in an accident at the opening of the railway between Manchester and Liverpool.*

This railway marked the appearance of a new economic and social force, and helped to accelerate the pace of that industrial transformation which was rapidly making inevitable some measure of reform. In 1825 the application of steam to transport by land made practicable a great improvement of communications, and rendered possible an increasingly rapid exploitation of our industrial resources. The "canal boom," which had begun half a century earlier, had already facilitated industrial development enormously by providing cheap and easy transport, especially for heavy goods, where it had before been inadequate. Brindley, Telford and others had spanned the country with a network of useful waterways, over which transit was slow, indeed, but cheaper, and for many purposes more efficient, than by pack-horse or wagon.

During the same period the road system of the country had also been greatly changed for the better. With all their defects—and they were many—the turnpike trusts had effected a substantial improvement in main roads, and had been the means of creating a body of specialists in road construction. During the early years of the nineteenth century Metcalfe, Telford and Macadam raised road-making to the dignity of a new scientific

profession: arterial roads with solid foundations and good surfaces were quickly increased in number and extent; and the improvement of the routes was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the speed and regularity of the coaching services. Passengers probably benefited more from these



WILLIAM IV

From the Painting in water colours in the National Portrait Gallery.

changes than manufacturers, who were primarily interested in the transport of goods, but all improvements in communication are of value to trade, since by knitting the country together they help to promote the growth of commerce. And the improved roadways were able to bear an increased burden of heavy traffic, with less than the old delay or risk.

Canals had provided a new kind of road for heavy goods, without much increase of speed; improved roads permitted greater speed, with less risk, for limited classes of traffic. But road and canal alike seemed to be nearing their maximum capacity for improvement on

* September 15th, 1830. See a letter from Peel, *Private Letters of R. P.*, pp. 123-4; cf. Creevey, p. 555.

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known lines. Railway and locomotive came in the nick of time and answered to industrial needs; for they could carry a great weight of traffic at a high speed. Railways were the result of a happy combination of two ideas, neither of them entirely new: the fixed track, and the moving as distinct from the stationary engine. And the credit for making them scientifically practicable and commercially effective belongs to George Stephenson. It was he who perfected the movable steam-engine. In 1825 he used it with success on the Stockton and Darlington Railway; and he was the moving spirit in the enterprise of constructing a railway between Liverpool and Manchester. His engineering skill was shown as clearly in laying the track as in perfecting the motive power. When the railway was opened Stephenson's success was amply demonstrated; and the far-seeing were already able to realize the importance, industrial and social, if not political, of the new system.

Unhappily the opening day was also the day of the first railway accident. Huskisson, who was lame and who had all his life been uncannily prone to accident, had got out of his carriage during a halt in order to speak to Wellington. On hearing the cry that an engine was approaching, he attempted to climb back into the coach. Always awkward and unlucky in his movements, he lost his hold and fell just as the engine came up. Before he could recover himself he was caught by the passing locomotive and was fatally injured. Huskisson was not in the highest rank of statesmen, but his reputation grows as the history of this period is more fully studied, and he was killed at a moment when such a man could ill be spared.

Death of George IV

Railways were a portent. Yet they came too late to augment the industrial causes which were already working for reform. But other changes helped in 1830 to speed its coming. George IV died, unlamented by the mass of his subjects. He had opposed reform and he was personally hostile to Grey, the veteran reformer who was the acknowledged chief of the Whig party. His suc-

cessor, William IV, had a more open mind—too open, as some thought, to hold very much or to retain anything long—and he was determined to play a popular part. "King George had not been dead three days," says Greville, "before everybody discovered that he was no loss and King William a great gain." He looked like "a respectable old admiral," and he had the bluff and popular manners of the traditional sailor. "Altogether he seems a kind-hearted, well-meaning, not stupid, burlesque, bustling old fellow, and if he doesn't go mad may make a very good king." In no sense was William a great man or a great king. He was incapable of taking any very serious part in administration. But he listened to his ministers and he wished to act as a constitutional king. There were moments when he forgot his part, and allowed the queen or others who surrounded him to exert an improper influence in his decisions. There even came a point, during the struggle for the Reform Bill, at which this forgetfulness was dangerous. But on the whole he tried, according to his limited powers, to act constitutionally, and it can scarcely be doubted that his accession on the eve of the battle for reform was fortunate for the nation.

French Revolution of 1830

In July, 1830, a revolution occurred in France. Charles X, with "the fatal obstinacy of a martyr" in the wrong cause, had tried to throttle parliamentary government and had lost his throne. Louis Philippe was made king of the French in the hope that he would succeed in harmonizing monarchy with popular feeling. His reign marked the dominance of the "bourgeoisie," which corresponded in some measure to those middle classes in England who were chafing at their exclusion from political power. But it was not so understood at first, and the revolution of July also encouraged the English working-classes who were clamouring for the franchise. Further, the lessons of the revolution of 1830 seem to have been read in England in a different sense from those of the great revolution of 1789, which had stayed reform in England for more than a generation by creating the fear

OPPOSITION OF WELLINGTON TO REFORM

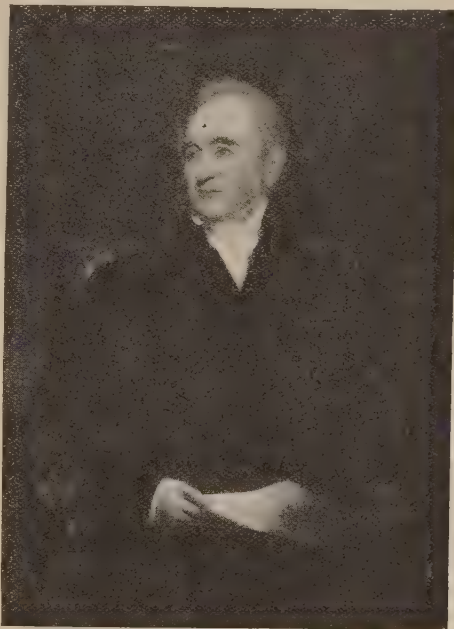
that it would be the prelude to unrestrained violence and disorder. Now the opposite cry was heard, and many argued that reform was necessary in order to stave off revolution.

After the accession of William IV, parliament was, as the law then required, almost immediately dissolved. The general election was greatly influenced by the events which had just occurred in France. So great was the excitement and so strong the demand for reform that the election became a political upheaval. The government lost fifty seats, an enormous turnover in those days of borough-mongering and of controlled elections. Most striking of all was the success of avowed reformers in the great counties—of Brougham in Yorkshire and of Joseph Hume in Middlesex. "When England was excited, which was rare," Disraeli said later in *Endymion*, "she spoke through her freeholders." Now her freeholders had declared themselves, and they were unmistakably for reform.

Wellington's ministry could still command a majority. But it was an unreliable one, and the Tory extremists were willing to oust the government in order to revenge themselves on Peel. It was clear that the ministry could not stand long without reinforcements, nor stand at all if it met the demand for reform with a flat and uncompromising negative. There were some hopes of an accommodation with the Canningites. But between the election and the meeting of parliament Huskisson was killed, and his death marked the end of the Canningites as a separate party. There was, however, small difference between the moderate Tories and the moderate Whigs; if they could have reached an understanding, probably some temporizing measure of reform might have been carried by agreement. Attempts were even made to effect a coalition between Wellington and Grey. But on the meeting of parliament Wellington spoilt every chance of such a settlement by an uncompromising declaration in the Lords against all reform. It was a fatal defiance to the Canningites and to the moderate Whigs. "I have not said too much, have I?" he is reported to have

asked as he sat down. Aberdeen, who was beside him, "put his chin forward with a gesture habitual to him when much moved, and only replied, 'You'll hear of it.'" After leaving the house he was asked what the duke had said. "He said" (was the reply) "that we were going out."

Aberdeen judged rightly. Peel had tried in



GEORGE STEPHENSON

From the Painting by H. W. Pickersgill, in the National Portrait Gallery.

the Commons to steer a wiser course, and had professed himself ready to consider moderate reform. Possibly his idea of a moderate reform was so moderate as to be next to nothing. But it is certain that he knew his colleagues and his followers to be divided on the question, and he was not prepared, at that juncture, to carry another capital measure in the teeth of violent opposition from his own party. He was glad to be "going out." The ministry was defeated in a division of minor importance on the civil list and, accepting the opportunity for escape, it yielded place to a ministry pledged to reform.



SEAL OF WILLIAM IV (1830-7)

This, the only seal, displays, on the obverse, figures of Minerva, Peace, Plenty, Neptune, Religion and Justice. The King wears the collars of St. George, the Bath, and the Guelphs of Hanover.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT REFORM BILL (1830-2)

A FEW days after the duke's unpromising declaration against reform, Francis Place described "the conduct of ministers" as "the first step in the British Revolution." He had in mind the July revolution in Paris and the August rising of the Belgians against the Dutch. But, though an acute observer, Place was for once astray. Mighty changes were to come, but they were to come gradually, and they were to owe little to violence. A new door to constitutional development was being pushed slowly open. But a reformed representation marked only one stage in a great process of national reconstruction which lasted for five years and ran far outside the purely constitutional sphere of central government. It included a refashioning of the government of the towns, the setting up of new machinery for the relief of destitution according to a new policy, and the first blundering attempts to assume control of conditions of work in factories; while the wage-earner was trying, in the same period,

to forge a better weapon for his own protection through the trade unions.

All this activity was part of the nation's effort to adapt itself to the conditions created by industrial change. Taking a wider view, it might be claimed, with some justice, that the process was not completed in the sphere of national finance and taxation, in central administration, or in the development of the cabinet system, until the close in 1846 of the great ministry of Sir Robert Peel. Only in the narrow sense in which the duke afterwards spoke of the Reform Act as a "revolution by due course of law" can the processes of this transformation be fairly described as the British Revolution.

There was little that can be called radical and nothing that can be called revolutionary about the ministry which Earl Grey gathered round him in mid-November, 1830. More justly it might be described as a cabinet of the land-owning aristocracy. Grey and his colleagues were reputed to own more acres than any earlier cabinet. Only five members

CHARACTER OF GREY'S MINISTRY

of the cabinet were drawn from the Commons. Of these, Brougham had wished to remain the tribune of the people whilst securing a large and permanent salary as master of the rolls, but he was buried in the Lords on accepting, sorely against his will, the office of lord chancellor; Althorp, leader of the Commons and chancellor of the exchequer, was heir to an earldom; Palmerston, secretary for foreign affairs, was an Irish peer; Sir James Graham of Netherby, who took the admiralty, bore a title so ancient that to convert it into a modern barony would have been almost as sacrilege; whilst Charles Grant, whose office as president of the board of control made him responsible for Indian affairs, was able at a later date to reconcile himself to a peerage.

If a refractory Tory, the Duke of Richmond, found a place in the cabinet, and if the Canningites were well provided for with all three secretaryships of State—Palmerston's colleagues were Melbourne at the home office and Goderich in charge of war and the colonies—it must be admitted that most of the greater Whig names were represented by the holders of major or minor offices. The modern critic is tempted to think of the words which Lowell, a generation later, put into the mouth of Hosea Biglow:

"It is something like a fulfilling the prophecies

When all the first families have all the best offices."

Place can hardly be blamed for calling the new ministry a "motley assembly" of "Whigs, Whig reformers, half-and-half Tories, and others who care little about anything beyond their emoluments . . ."; and Cobbett may be forgiven for his sceptical question, "What, then, will the new ministry do for the people?"

Weakness of the Ministry

Yet the ministry did not lack ability when men like Lord John Russell and Edward Stanley, each one day to become prime minister, were to be found not in the cabinet but in offices reckoned of the second rank; and though there were members of the cabinet who wanted to get off as cheaply as possible in the matter of reform, the ministry was presently to demonstrate its good faith in a

manner so surprising that Place confessed himself astounded and incredulous at finding the ministerial plan "so very much beyond anything which" he "had expected." It was not in regard to reform that the weaknesses of the ministry showed themselves most plainly. It was in other matters that it failed in skill or insight. Few of its members had had much experience of office, and the Whigs never attained to the high standard of administrative efficiency set by Peel. Despite the capital they had made of the agitation for economy while they were in opposition, they had no financial policy worth the name; and they showed, during the agricultural distresses of the time, a want of social sympathy amounting almost to callousness.

Misery of the Agricultural Labourer

During the winter of 1830-1 rural England was in a flame. There is general agreement that the labourer's standard of life had fallen during the years between 1795 and 1830. The working of the poor-law, which was designed to lighten his hardships, was so cumbrous, so inefficient, so fatally in contradiction of its avowed purpose, that, in spite of the huge sums spent in relief, it depressed the unhappy labourer instead of raising him, and increased the evil which it was supposed to mitigate. The effects of enclosures are still a matter of dispute, but it cannot well be denied that the labourer gained little, if any, profit from them, and that, in most cases, enclosures deprived him of privileges which had formerly enabled him to eke out his scanty livelihood. Whatever its causes, the abject misery of vast masses of the English peasantry in 1830 is beyond question. Cobbett seems to have been disposed to excuse the farmer and to cast the whole blame upon the landlord. Rents had risen during the war, when even the poorest land could be cultivated at a profit, and the landlord was less ready to lower them when the markets fell than he had been to raise them when profits were more generous. Caught between the upper and nether millstones of exorbitant rents and rising poor-rates, the lot of the tenant-farmer was not, perhaps, a happy one.

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It is certain that when riot and arson broke out in the rural districts in the second half of 1830 the immediate causes to which the outbreaks were attributed were the introduction of threshing machines and the importation of Irish harvesters. No doubt the machines would have come in any event, and no doubt, also, the farmer who had exhausted his capital could neither have bought new machinery nor drawn fresh

end of August, when a mob of four hundred labourers smashed some machines. In the succeeding months it spread from parish to parish, apparently without concert, each parish finding its own leader and rising spontaneously to secure a redress of its grievances in its own way. Machine-breaking was a prominent feature of the risings, which have been called "the last labourers' revolt,"* but in most cases there was no serious violence, though occasionally an unpopular overseer was deported. Looting was conspicuously rare, and where the farmers were willing to meet them the men put forward a demand for better wages in moderate if determined language. Nor were the employers always strong in their opposition; often they agreed upon an improved scale of wages and strove to secure the help of the labourers when they demanded some redress of their own grievances—high rents and burdensome tithes.

There were even some magistrates who held that sympathy and reasonable concession would have secured peace in the disturbed districts. But broken machines, the blazing ricks of those who had met the men with violence or contempt, and threatening letters bearing the

ominous signature "Swing," raised all the terrors of revolution—terrors which were increased by the loyalty of the men, who refused to betray their comrades, and made it impossible in many cases to bring the incendiaries and machine-breakers to justice. Peel showed less than his usual insight in dealing with the situation. He readily sent troops, and even artillery, to the various disturbed districts in order to give help and confidence to the distracted authorities.

The revolt was in full swing when Grey took office. Hitherto it had affected only Kent and parts of Sussex and Surrey. Melbourne

* By J. L. and Mrs. Hammond, whose *Village Labourer* should be consulted.



SWING, THE RICK-BURNER

Evicted first from his farm to make room for a new fox-covert, and then from his cottage for non-payment of tithe, "Swing" is explaining to the clergyman on horseback the causes of rick-firing.

From a Wood-block in a contemporary pamphlet.

supplies of labour from Ireland, but it does seem as if the outbreaks of the labourers were due to attempts by the farmers to lessen the cost of production. At a time when the starving condition of the rural labourers was being proclaimed even in the House of Lords, it is not surprising that these threats to his miserable livelihood should have made the labourer see red. The thresher was the one man among the agricultural wage-earners who had a prospect of maintaining a reasonable standard of life without resort to the poor-law. The threshing machine threatened to send him to join his fellow-labourers in the Slough of Despond.

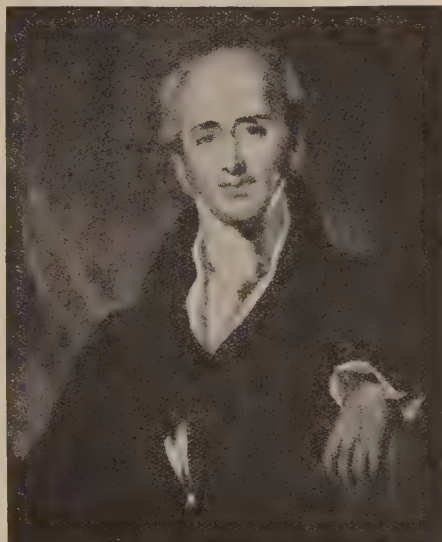
Rioting had begun in Kent towards the

COLLAPSE OF THE AGRICULTURAL RISING

had no sooner taken over the seals of the home office than he was confronted by more widespread risings, more explosive, more destructive, less intelligently directed and controlled. Presently all Berkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire were in a blaze. It is not a matter for wonder. The current weekly wage in Berkshire varied from 7s. to 9s., in Hampshire it was 8s., and in Wiltshire 7s., falling sometimes, as an officer sent down by Melbourne reported to him, as low as 6s. The labourers asked for modest wages, 2s. a day, or weekly wages even smaller, but there was some "mob-begging" and on the whole the gangs seem to have terrified the farmers and clergymen more than in the eastern counties. Workhouses were also attacked and destroyed at Selborne and Headley. But the rising in these counties was of brief duration. Melbourne issued a circular to magistrates instructing them to take vigorous action, urging them to arrest suspected persons, and promising them an indemnity in case their zeal should lead them to overstep the limits of the law. Military officers were sent down to advise them, and the risings seem to have fizzled out in about a fortnight. Rather late in the day the movement spread into the far-western counties and into the midlands; Cambridgeshire was affected, and even Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Cumberland. But, broadly speaking, the risings were a revolt of the agricultural south, of that quiet and patient peasantry that in earlier years had raised no tremor of anxiety when the more turbulent north was driving magistrates to panic and helping to fill the letter-bags of the home office with agitated records of its misdeeds.

By the second week of December the risings had been mastered or had lost their seriousness, and Melbourne was solemnly rebuking those who had granted the labourers' demands or had mediated between masters and men. Brougham had already announced from the woolsack that soon "the sword of justice" should "be unsheathed to smite." Special commissions were appointed to try the rioters. During the riots only one man had been killed—one of the rioters themselves (shot by a member of the

yeomanry or by a farmer). The rioters, too, had suffered most of the few serious bodily injuries inflicted during the disturbances. Yet a number of the prisoners were sentenced to death, many more to transportation for life, others to transportation for shorter periods, and several hundreds to imprisonment. In the long run a number of these sentences were mitigated. Apart from



CHARLES, SECOND EARL GREY

From the Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, in the National Portrait Gallery.

six men or boys hanged for arson, three only of those sentenced to death lost their lives. Over four hundred and fifty of the rioters were transported; one estimate put the number as high as six hundred. Over four hundred were imprisoned at home. A few years later Lord John Russell pardoned many of the men transported; but few of those who were taken to New South Wales ever saw their homes again.

One cannot wonder at the fury with which Cobbett assailed a ministry whose liberal professions in politics were compatible with such hardness of heart towards men driven by want and suffering to make a last despairing effort on behalf of themselves and their starving families. Nor can ignorance be pleaded as an excuse. There is ample

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

evidence in the home office papers that Melbourne received sound advice from responsible men who kept their heads during the panic and showed greater insight than the ministry. Not merely was the advice unheeded—it was resented and rebuked.

In another matter Melbourne contrived to exasperate advanced reformers whose

which were alleged to be incitements to rick-burning. Though Cobbett often sailed very near the wind, and perhaps did so on this occasion, it is difficult to read into his words the meaning put upon them by the Crown lawyers. Indeed, the general tendency of Cobbett's teaching was that salvation must come through constitutional



THE VILLAGE RETORT OR GHOST OF SMALL TYTHES.

"A Parson is a thing Established almost every where and like the Lion in his native Climate much more powerfull in Villages than in Towns or Cities. He is used for the benefit of Souls—but at the same time is considered injurious to the pocket."

From the Aquatint by Thomas Sutherland in the Cruikshank Caricatures (vol. 7, p. 21), in the British Museum.

support the ministry was soon to need. The home office began a vigorous campaign against the cheap press. Cobbett afterwards declared that the Whigs had carried on more State prosecutions in seven months than the Tories had done in seven years. Radicals like Hetherington, the hero of the agitation for an unstamped press, and Carlile, editor of *The Prompter*, a paper which expressed the opinions of the more advanced working-class reformers, were fined and imprisoned. Cobbett himself was prosecuted for some passages in *The Register* for December 11th

reform and not from the rough and uncertain justice that might be temporarily won by violence. Brougham had written, after the appearance of the offending passages, to ask for some former publications of Cobbett's, which, as their author was to show triumphantly at his trial, the lord chancellor thought might be of great use in quietening the insurgent labourers.

The trial did not come on until July, 1831, and as the jury disagreed the case was abandoned. But the result was that the reformer who now swayed the working

WHIG PROPOSALS FOR REFORM

classes more than any other was winning a personal triumph against the administration and declaring in court that "the Whigs do everything by force and violence. . . . The Tories ruled us with rods, but the Whigs scourge us with scorpions," at the very moment that the ministry most

advanced reformers; Lord John Russell, whom Brougham's removal to the Lords had restored to his old position as the Whig spokesman on reform in the Commons; Lord Duncannon, learned in the doubtful lore of rotten boroughs; and Sir James Graham. Russell drafted the first plan. As amended



All classes were excited over the great question of the Reform Bill. The popular cry of "The Bill, and nothing but the Bill!" was heard in every quarter.

From "Caricatures" (1868-8-8-9375), in the British Museum.

needed to conciliate the working man and to unite every friend of reform for the struggle to achieve it. "There is nothing more evident," wrote Carlyle, at the end of 1830, "than that the Whigs intend a reign of terror."

Much Radical irritation was fortunately allayed when the Whig proposals for reform at last became known on March 1st, 1831. A committee of four had been at work upon them since the end of November—the half-Radical Durham, Grey's son-in-law, chosen probably because he was in touch with the

in committee it recommended that fifty rotten boroughs should be disfranchised, that fifty more should lose one member apiece, that two members each should be assigned to about thirty large unrepresented towns, that twenty counties should each elect two additional members, and that the representation of London should be increased by four or six. In counties, copyholders and holders of long leases were to vote as well as freeholders. On the borough qualification and the ballot the committee was less decided. In the end it suggested the ballot

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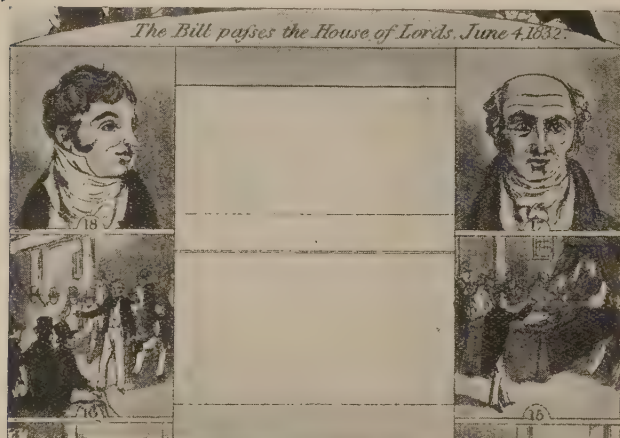
with a £20 householder qualification, in preference to Russell's first plan of a lower franchise—£10 instead of £20—without the ballot. The cabinet rejected the ballot and approved of the rest of the report, though it went far beyond the real wishes of many ministers.

Grey was now faced by one of his most

fears were, as it turned out, to be subsequently realized. But in each case he was loyal to his ministers to a degree which the accepted theory of the royal prerogative at that date hardly required of him.

Before the bill was introduced Russell found that the £20 franchise would not do. It would have created some electorates even

smaller than those swept aside by the bill; in one constituency there would have been three electors, in another only one. The £10 franchise was therefore restored, and the king consented to the change. It was fortunate that Russell's careful attention to detail saved the ministry from a blunder which would have exposed it to the charge of abolishing one kind of rotten borough only to invent another. Meantime, also, the bill had been modified in detail: sixty boroughs with a population of less than two thousand were to lose their separate representation altogether, and forty-seven with a population of less than four thousand were to lose one member each. But these secrets had been well kept. The Radicals were suspicious, and tried to hold up the supposedly feeble hands of



THE REFORM LADDER

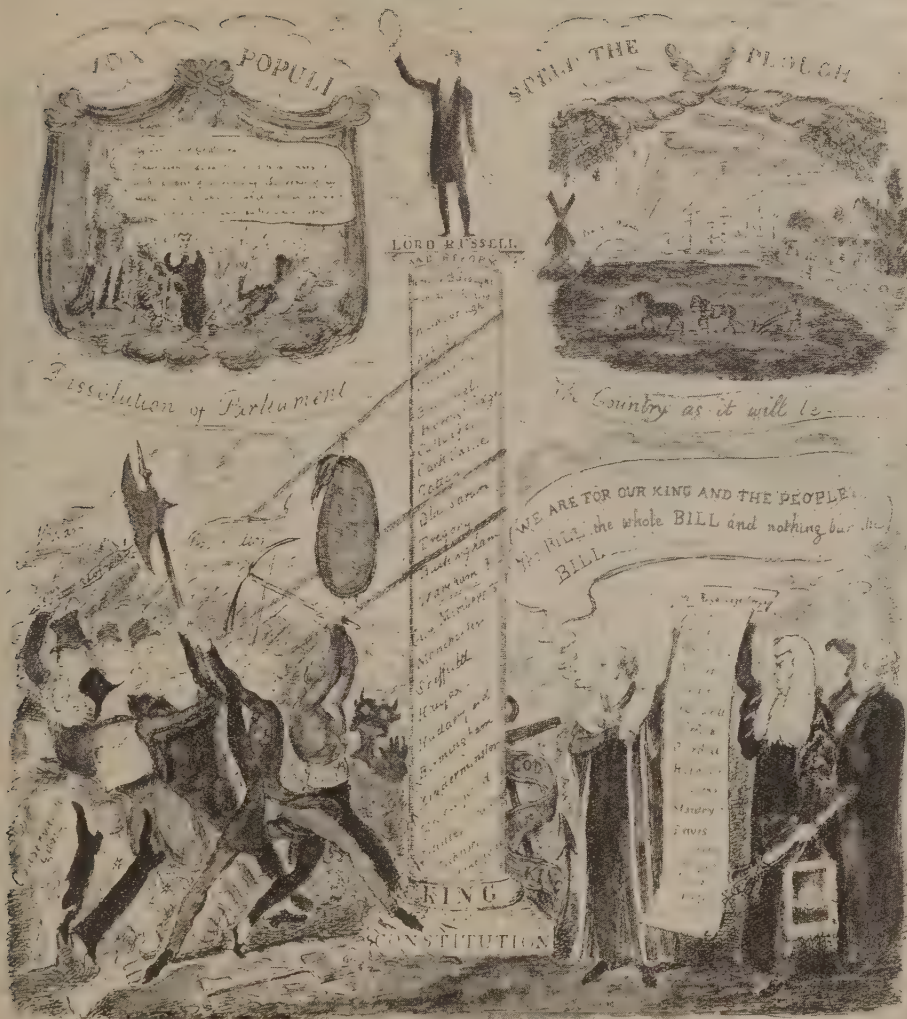
This is from a series of colour prints depicting the long struggle for Reform which begins with Burke's motion to bring in his Bill of Reform in the year 1781, and ends with the passing of Russell's bill by the Lords in 1832. The above illustrations from the "Ladder" show the concluding stages of the bill's career. Plate 15: Lord John Russell proposes that Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham do return members to Parliament; negatived by 188 to 140 (February 23rd, 1830). Plate 16: Lord John Russell proposes a measure of Reform; negatived by 213 to 117 (May 30th, 1830). Plate 17: Lord Althorp (1830). Plate 18: Lord John Russell (1831).

Part of a Colour Print (1868-8-8-12986) in the Historical Portfolio in the British Museum.

difficult tasks, that of persuading the king to accept the proposals. William IV was afraid of an extreme measure which might let in the Radicals, but to Grey's relief he agreed to the plan, whilst making it plain that he looked upon reform as a disagreeable necessity. But he treated his ministers fairly, though he was as far from being the zealous reformer that he was sometimes represented to be during the ensuing struggle, as he was from being the helpless monarch coerced by wicked ministers whom the opponents of reform pictured from time to time. What he dreaded most was that the bill might lead to a tumultuous general election or a struggle with the Lords. Both his

ministers by a bombardment of petitions. The Tories, and not a few Whigs, were ill-tempered and uneasy. But ministers kept their own counsel, knowing that their one chance of success in a house in which even the election of 1830 had given them only a flickering and uncertain majority would depend upon a dramatic surprise.

When Russell rose to introduce the bill he astounded both its friends and its enemies. The house gasped as he read out the list of doomed boroughs. It was held by many people at the time, and by some since, that if Peel had risen at once and moved the rejection of the bill he might have killed it at its birth. But, though the bill might have



THE GLORIOUS REFORM IN PARLIAMENT.

London: Printed by R. B. Smith, 1832.

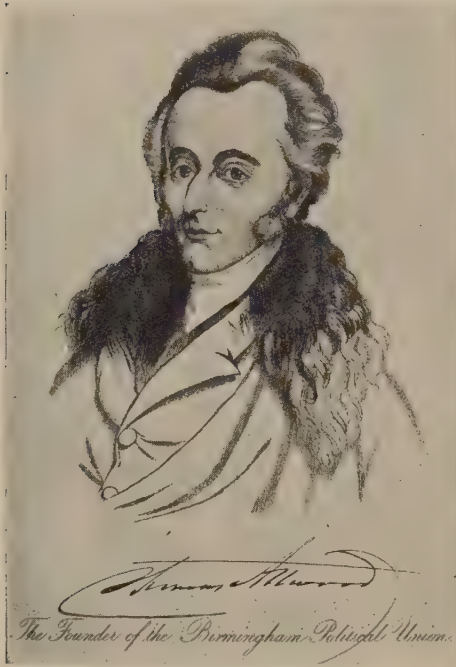
PASSING OF THE REFORM BILL, 1832

The apotheosis of Lord John Russell. Names of "rotten boroughs" to be disfranchised, and other towns to be enfranchised, are on the pillar of "King and Constitution," which the Tories are trying to hew down, while the Whigs stand bravely to their pledges.

From the Cartoon by Robert Cruikshank ("Caricatures," 1914-10-9-33), in the British Museum.

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been strangled, reform could not have been stayed for long, and the road to it might have been stained by wholesale violence. The boroughs might have been saved, though only for a moment, but public security might have been the sacrifice. "Turn where we may, within, around," said Macaulay, "the voice



THOMAS ATTWOOD,

Founder of the Birmingham Political Union.

From the Engraving by Robert Seymour in "The Schoolmaster at Home" (July 14th, 1832), in the British Museum.

of great events is proclaiming to us, Reform, that you may preserve. . . . Renew the youth of the State." Peel laid his finger on the weak point of the bill, which enfranchised the substantial men of the middle classes, when he said that under the unreformed system there was "no class of the people, however humble," that was excluded from the franchise. But this was an argument for the Radicals, and proved, in the long run, to be the political source of Chartism. For the bill excluded from the franchise the working-class electors of Preston and Westminster, as well as hundreds of impoverished pot-wallopers in tiny boroughs,

whose influence upon legislation the keenest eye could not have detected. Peel spoke for the patron, not for the patronized, and his argument was less ingenious than it was ingenious.

The real trial of strength was deferred to the second reading. Meantime opinion out of doors had set strongly in favour of the bill. Even the Radicals, though wanting more, were satisfied that nothing better could then be attempted, and, indeed, the scope of the bill exceeded their most sanguine hopes. But it has to be remembered that although the House of Commons was more friendly to reform than any previous house, and although it was recognized even by Peel and by many of his followers that reform of some sort needs must come, the house had not been elected to carry reform, and there were many lukewarm reformers even among the professed believers. The second reading was carried, but only by a majority of one. The fight was renewed in committee, and though the ministry made some concessions it was defeated on what was regarded as a vital amendment by a majority of eight. Not without difficulty the king was persuaded to grant a dissolution. Once persuaded, he stood loyally by his ministers, and even went down to the Lords in hot haste in order to prorogue parliament before the angry and excited peers could carry an address of protest. Seldom has unwilling monarch gained more enthusiastic applause for a distasteful act. For a while the king was the idol of the Radicals.

Never had a general election been fought amid such excitement as that of 1831. Through the country there rang the cry of "The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill!" * Extreme reformers fought for it as earnestly as if it had been the measure of their dreams instead of the enfranchisement of the middle classes which it was. They showed little of Peel's solicitude for pot-wallopers and the voters by scot and lot. Inability to foresee the way in which the new franchise would work doubtless accounts for the comparatively uncritical attitude of

* Sometimes "The two Bills" - William IV and the Reform Bill.

RESULT OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

the rank and file. Eyes were fixed, too, upon the pocket boroughs that were to be condemned or amputated. An instinctive feeling that the bill struck a shrewd blow at the tradition of representation as property, a marketable commodity like any other, had much to do with popular enthusiasm. And though there was an odd belief current as to the "finality" of the bill, the leaders

and aided candidates. The four boroughs of the Isle of Wight, for instance, were purchased for £4,000 from the embarrassed trustee of a minor, ludicrously uncertain whether his duty to his ward required him to return sturdy opponents of the bill or to take his last chance of saving what still might be saved of a doomed property. The English counties give, however, the best general index



BRISTOL RIOTS

Queen Square on the night of October 30th, 1831.

From a contemporary Print, published by O. C. Lane, Clifton, in the British Museum (Books 1.g.3).

of the advanced reformers recognized that the first step costs the great effort; they accepted the bill for what it might lead to rather than for what it was. Thomas Attwood, the Birmingham banker, rallied the forces of his Political Union, formed early in 1830, and Place showed his wonted activity as an organizer. All his energy and enthusiasm would alone have been insufficient. Even allowing that the Whig nomination boroughs were at the disposal of ministers, there still remained seats to be bought and electors to be bribed. The opponents of the bill poured out money like water, and the Whigs were obliged to collect a fund for the election. With this they bought seats

to the state of public feeling; seventy-six out of their eighty-two representatives were pledged to reform.

Grey's position after the election was very different from his position before it. His difficulties were no longer in the House of Commons, where he had a solid majority behind him, but in the Lords and with the king. The bill was reintroduced, and passed the Commons, September 21st, by a majority of more than a hundred. One serious change had been made in it during its passage through the house—the Chandos clause had been inserted, giving a vote to £50 tenants-at-will in the counties. This had the appearance of a liberal addition to the franchise. But

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the qualification lent itself to the creation of "faggot" votes, subject, in the absence of the ballot, to the landlord's influence. Twelve years after the Reform Act had become law Cobden pointed out that the landowners had profitably used this clause, "by making brothers, sons, nephews, uncles—ay, down to the third generation, if they happened to live upon the farm—all qualify for the same holding, and swear, if need be, that they were partners in the farm. . . . This they did, and successfully, and by that means gained the counties."

Bill Rejected in the Lords

On October 8th the Lords divided on the second reading of the bill and threw it out by a majority of 41. In a broad way it may be said that the "Pittite" peerage was against it, while peers who sat in right of earlier creations were for it; it was calculated that 108 out of 112 whose peerages were of earlier date than 1790 supported the bill. Of the bishops, twenty-one voted for the rejection of the measure, and critics did not fail to point out that if they had all reversed their votes the bill would have been carried—a suggestion which did not sweeten popular feeling towards the Church and was the source of much bitterness in years to come. Reformers were deeply disappointed, for it seemed impossible to overcome the resistance of the Lords save by a wholesale creation of peers. Grey himself was at this time opposed to so drastic a measure, and the king would not think of it, though he was almost equally averse to a resignation of the cabinet. Ministers decided to remain in office and to try again.

Cabinet ministers might maintain the appearance of calm, but the majority in the country placed less restraint upon its feelings. At least one newspaper appeared with mourning edges when it announced the vote in the Lords. Muffled bells were tolled. Meetings were held up and down the country to protest against the killing of the bill, and some of the political unions threatened a sort of passive resistance in the form of a refusal to pay taxes. For the first time reformers like Place seem to have been really alarmed, fearing that the populace might get out of

hand, and that influence would pass, as to some extent it did, to the extremists. Hitherto, though there had been sporadic disturbances, they had mostly been trivial, and by no means all of them had been caused solely by the excitement about reform.

Riots in the Country

Now there came more serious riots—in the west at Blandford, Sherborne and Yeovil; at Derby, where the rioters stormed the jail; at Nottingham, where they burnt the historic castle; and worst of all at Bristol, where the populace, inflamed by the presence of Wetherell, the recorder, an intemperate opponent of the bill, besieged the Mansion House. A little common prudence on the part of the authorities might have checked the rabble before it got out of hand, but both the city fathers and the commander of the troops sent to support them were utterly lacking in decision. For the greater part of three days the city was in the hands of the rabble; the Mansion House, the customs houses, the bishop's palace, three jails and two toll-houses, besides other buildings, were burnt down; and according to tradition the cathedral was only saved by a few volunteers. No defence of the rioters is possible; equally there can be no defence of the blind imprudence to which the riot was due, or of the incompetence shown in the handling of it.

Nothing is more difficult than to assess the effect of these riots. They confirmed the worst fears of some; others they convinced of the truth of Macaulay's advice, "Reform, that you may preserve." John Bright said later that the bill passed "in a hurricane of popular feeling," "The constitution was helped on by brickbats. . . ." But there seems ground for belief that the reformers, where they were organized in political unions and the like, generally exercised a restraining influence upon the wilder spirits. It was fortunate, too, that there was a Sydney Smith to ease a tense situation with his comical good humour. The Lords, he said in a speech at Taunton, reminded him of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington during the great storm at Sidmouth in 1824, when "there set in a great flood upon that town." "In the midst of this sublime and

OPPOSITION OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

terrible storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens . . . vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen, be at your ease—be quiet and steady. You will beat Mrs. Partington."

Reintroduction of the Bill

Meanwhile Russell and Althorp had been engaged on the hard task of making the bill more conciliatory without making it less efficient. The earlier bills had aimed at reducing the membership of the Commons by taking more seats from the rotten boroughs than were given to the new constituencies and the counties. This plan, good in itself though unpopular then and since, was now abandoned. Concessions were made to the friends of the rotten boroughs, while the efficiency of the bill was maintained by increasing the number of members assigned to new boroughs or to counties. There was a prolonged battle in the Commons, but the bill was carried on the third reading by a majority of 116.

Attempts had been made by some of the moderates in the cabinet to ease the passage of the bill through the Lords by negotiating with the more reasonable of the opposing peers, known as "The Waverers." These gentlemen existed, but they were not the most influential members of their house, and they were unable to pledge any definite number of peers to refrain from casting a hostile vote. They wanted to exact too much and to concede too little. The negotiations broke down. Grey was probably well advised not to trust overmuch to the support of "the Waverers," and one shrewdly suspects that they have appeared more prominently in history than is their right, because Greville, the diarist, acquired some fussy self-esteem by acting as their agent.

Much more significant were the negotiations with the king for a special creation of peers, if necessary, in order to pass the

bill. When the bill was sent up to the Lords, Grey believed that he had the king's promise, under certain conditions, to create sufficient peers to carry it, if it could not otherwise be carried. But as the crisis drew nearer the king recoiled from so violent an exercise of the prerogative and ministers had some anxious moments. Fortunately, however, the bill was carried on the second reading, though the majority was only 9, and it owed something to "the Waverers," who still hoped for compromise in committee.

Lyndhurst precipitated the crisis. He carried an amendment, the effect of which was to postpone consideration of the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs until the enfranchisement clauses could be debated. Ministers promptly asked the king for a creation of not fewer than 50 peers. After consideration he refused to grant so extensive a creation, and accepted the alternative, the resignation of ministers. Lyndhurst and Wellington tried to form a ministry on the basis of substantial reform, but Peel refused to be a party to an arrangement which would, he believed, destroy the country's faith in the declarations of public men. Without Peel it was impossible to face the Commons, or, indeed, to form a ministry of any strength.

Failure of Wellington

For some days the duke persisted in the attempt. Excitement in the country rose to fever heat; the political unions, in close communication throughout the country, under the direction of Attwood and Place, prepared to refuse taxes, to barricade the large towns, and, whilst avoiding collisions with the military, to paralyse the working of the whole machinery of the national life. Place issued his famous placard, "To stop the Duke, go for Gold," and there was a run on the banks, though there is no evidence that it perturbed the duke any more than the petition in which the Westminster electors asked the Commons to refuse supplies to any but a Whig government. What really stopped the duke was his inability to get the support of sufficient men of ability, coupled with the discovery, during a hot debate in the House of Commons on May 14th, that not the Whigs only, but also the most extreme

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Tories, thought it would be an act of dishonour for the Tories to take office in order to carry a reform bill equivalent in all essentials to the Whig bill which they had tried to

before resigning. This guarantee they obtained both orally and in writing on May 18th, after the king had failed to persuade a sufficient number of Tory peers to promise



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

From an Engraving after the Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

destroy. On May 15th Wellington had to tell the king that his efforts had failed.

Grey was recalled to the king's counsels, but the Whigs refused to retain office without the guarantee for which they had asked

that they would oppose the bill no further. With the king's pledge in his pocket, Grey resumed his task. Wellington had already decided to refrain from further opposition to the bill, and on May 20th the king's

THE REFORM BILL PASSED

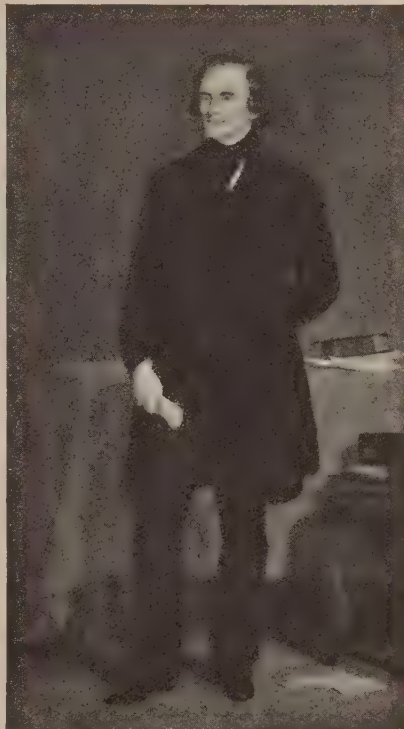
secretary made the passage of it secure by a calculated indiscretion. He let it be known among the Tory lords that the king had agreed to create sufficient peers to carry the measure, if such creations should become necessary. The duke also made it clear to his followers that the bill must pass in any case, and that the choice was now between allowing it to pass and preserving the Tory ascendancy in the Lords, or opposing it until it was passed by the aid of a large number of new peers who would give a general increase of strength to the Whig party.

These hints and warnings were enough. Most of the Tory peers took no further part in the divisions. They were not too blind or too angry to see the folly of throwing the handle after the hatchet by sacrificing their supremacy in the Lords merely because they were losing that predominant control over the Commons which they had enjoyed under the nomination system, now to be narrowly restricted though not wholly destroyed. The bill passed speedily through committee, with a few trifling amendments, and on June 4th the third reading was carried by a majority of over 80, only 22 "die-hards" keeping up the fight to the bitter end. On June 7th, 1832, Grey had the honourable satisfaction of announcing, as one of the king's commissioners, that the royal assent had been given to a reform of which he had been the parliamentary advocate for almost forty years.

Scottish and Irish reform bills had yet to be carried, but the battle was over. The Scottish bill, piloted through the Commons by Jeffrey, passed the Lords on July 12th; it gave eight additional seats to the towns, where the franchise was to be as in England; in the counties the vote was given, as nearly as possible, to the same classes as in England, but of necessity the qualification was defined in other ways. Ireland gained five members; the borough franchise was the same as in the English bill; but the qualification in the counties, raised in 1829, was not restored to the 40s. freeholders. An eminent authority has declared that the Irish act was "the least successful of the three great Reform Acts of 1832." Certainly it dis-

appointed O'Connell, since the old county franchise was not restored, but O'Connell probably underestimated the extent to which the more liberal borough franchise augmented the Catholic vote and supplied him with a new source of strength.

Wordsworth told Gladstone in 1836 that



LORD JOHN RUSSELL

From the Painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

the English Reform Act had "brought out too prominently a particular muscle of the national frame: the strength of the towns," and that "the cure was to be found in a large further enfranchisement." He was right as to the future, but poets are seldom good at statistics, and he was wrong in regard to the strength of the towns. In England and Wales the act gave 65 additional seats to the counties, and if it threw into them the tiny electorates of many disfranchised boroughs, it also withdrew from them 42 populous towns or metropolitan areas. These newly

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created constituencies were given, in all, 64 seats, or one fewer than were added to the counties. The rotten boroughs lost in the end 142 seats, 26 fewer than were taken from them by the bill as first introduced by Russell. Some of the larger counties were partitioned into separate constituencies, a great practical gain, as was the provision in the bill for the registration of electors. The life-interests of existing voters were also preserved. But the main principles laid down by Grey and the committee of four were the principles embodied in the final act, and some reformers, among them Cobbett and Hunt, thought the act better than the original bill. Grey claimed that the measure was in the best sense "conservative of the constitution." He had struck the necessary mean between the reform which prejudice would have refused to yield and the reform which popular clamour demanded. And the Reform Act must be judged not by what it failed to do, but by what it did. Its faults were many, yet it opened the door to the

removal of them. John Bright declared, when he could see it in true perspective after more than thirty years, that though it was not a good bill "it was a great bill when it passed."

A general election under the new act was held just before the Christmas of 1832. The Whigs returned with gathered strength, but the new constituencies and the transformed electorate influenced the character of the House of Commons less than some had hoped or others had feared. Cobbett was chosen as the first member for Oldham, but his election was more important as a symbol of change than for anything that it enabled him to accomplish. In parliament he won scant success. For a generation yet the Commons was to be, in the main, a house of country gentlemen. It was a house out of sympathy with the small group of Radicals to whom it might sometimes, though in rather belated fashion, owe the ideas which informed its policy, but whom it could not learn to trust.



LONDON BRIDGE AT THE SOUTHWARK END (1831)

From the Print by E. W. Cooke, R.A.



THE PRINCE'S PARADE, LIVERPOOL: FROM THE MERSEY (1832)

From the Engraving by R. Brandard, after the Drawing by S. Austin, in the Topographical Portfolio, British Museum.

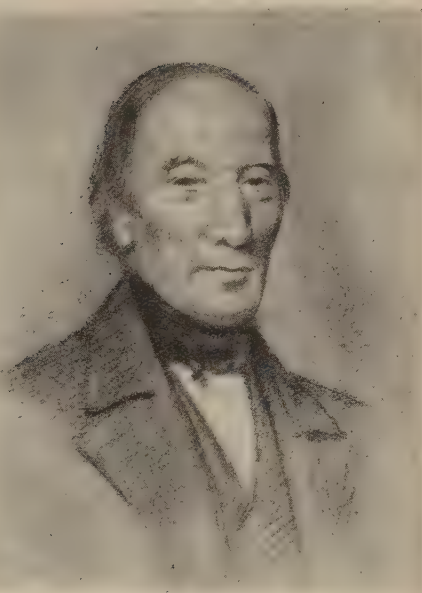
CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL LEGISLATION (1832-5)

ONE important, though cautious, advance in social legislation made by the new parliament—namely, the Factory Act of 1833—might have been more difficult to carry if the industrial capitalists had been stronger in the Commons. Early attempts to regulate work in factories were mainly designed for the protection of children or very young employees. The first, Sir Robert Peel's act of 1802, half education bill, half factory bill, had dealt only with apprentices, whose working day it had limited to twelve hours. It had attempted to secure that the apprentices should live and work in healthy conditions, but it had left the enforcement of the act to the justices of the peace. Robert Owen, fresh from his own experiments in the enlightened management of a cotton mill, attempted to secure a more general regulation of factories. His efforts led to the pass-

ing of the first genuine Factory Act, in 1819, but the act was a disappointment to its promoter. It applied only to cotton mills; and though it forbade the employment of children under nine years of age and limited the hours of work of persons under sixteen to twelve hours a day, exclusive of meal-times, it still left the enforcement of the regulations to the justices, whose administration of Peel's act had already proved to be ineffective.

Robert Owen had urged that a staff of qualified and salaried inspectors should be appointed to see that the act was carried out. Through want of the vigilant oversight which such a staff would have provided, the act was systematically and shamelessly evaded. An amending act, passed shortly afterwards, also whittled away some of the slender safeguards of the law. Hobhouse carried a measure in 1825 designed to



ROBERT OWEN

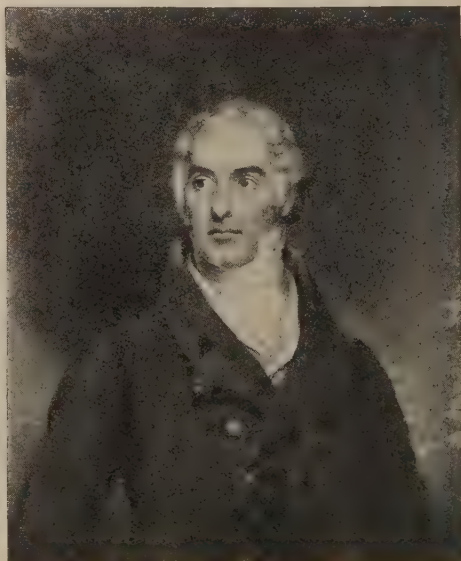
From the Drawing, attributed to Sam Bough, in the National Portrait Gallery.

strengthen the law in some respects and to check evasions, and together with another act, passed in 1831, it tried to prevent justices who were interested directly or indirectly in cotton mills from sitting on the bench when prosecutions under these acts were before it. But in the absence of adequate inspection no precaution against a mill-owner acting as judge in what was virtually his own cause was sufficient to make the acts a reality.

Two Tory philanthropists, Richard Oastler and Michael Thomas Sadler, now espoused the cause of the unhappy factory children, and began a crusade for the legal enforcement of a ten-hours day, Oastler through the newspapers and Sadler in the House of Commons. Sadler's Ten Hours Bill, introduced in 1831, met with strong opposition from the manufacturers. They were still dissatisfied when the evidence given before a parliamentary committee, over which Sadler presided in 1832, proved to all impartial judges the need for some such regulation as was proposed in the bill. In the election of 1832 Sadler was defeated at Leeds by Macaulay, but the factory children

found a new friend in Lord Ashley, better known as the Earl of Shaftesbury. He, too, belongs to the distinguished band of Tory philanthropists, and, however wayward his political course in other matters, there is no reason to question the sincerity of his devotion to the crusade against the "slavery" of children, as Oastler called it.

In 1833 Ashley introduced a new Ten Hours Bill. The manufacturers demanded a commission of inquiry. This was granted, and though the commission was at least partially a packed one, it reported in favour of more stringent regulations. On its report the Factory Act of 1833 was based. The act was applied not merely to cotton mills but to most of the textile manufactures. It forbade night work for all under eighteen, whose hours of labour were not to exceed twelve in the day or sixty-nine in the week; and it laid down nine hours in the day, and forty-eight in the week as the maximum period for which young children might be allowed to work in the first few years of their employment. And, most important of all, it provided for the appointment of four independent, salaried inspectors to secure



MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER

From the Mezzotint by T. Lupton, after the Painting by W. Robinson, in the Cheylesmore Collection (1902-10-11-3150), in the British Museum.

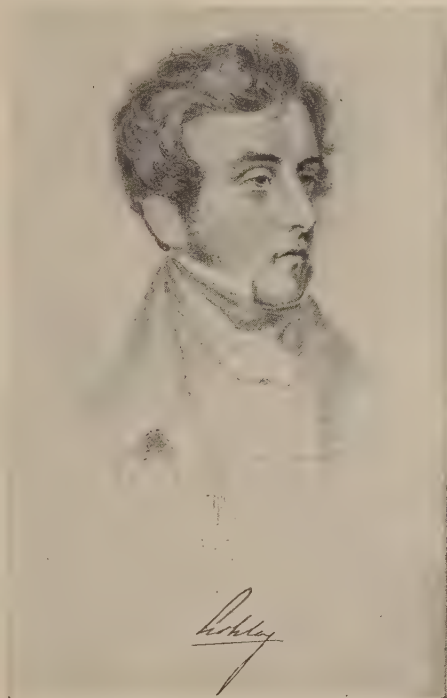
EXPERIMENTS IN TRADE UNIONISM

the enforcement of the act. In so doing it was returning to Owen's original plan, and setting up the only machinery by which the most well-intentioned legislation could be made effective.

While parliament had been trying to devise a plan for the protection of the children, the men had been experimenting with means for protecting themselves. The emancipation of the unions of artisans from the old laws against combinations of workmen in 1825 had come on the eve of a financial crash. The men's clubs, eager to test their freedom, had in many cases made the perennial mistake of striking on a falling market. They had been disappointed by the results and were disposed to blame their organization for failures, which were due rather to inexperienced leadership and to the depression in trade. Most of the clubs or unions were confined to one trade and to a single locality. The minds of the operatives turned towards some more general organization of the working classes in the hope that a union of trades, or *trades union*, might give them the force which they felt to be lacking in the local union of a single trade, or *trade union*. This proved, in the event, to be a divergence from the line of progress, ultimately found in the expansion of the local club of one trade into a district or national organization. But in the early 'thirties the industrial structure was perhaps too local in character to have afforded a national trade union the same chance of success that it afterwards attained. It was still too soon to think of the organization of industry in national as distinct from local terms. The same objection applied even more forcibly to the device which now attracted many active minds among the artisans—"The Trades Union," or "a complete union of all the workers in the country in a single national Trades Union."

This idea was not entirely new. Attempts, originating in Manchester, had already been made without success in 1818, and again in 1826, to establish a national organization of wage-workers. John Doherty, variously described as a hot-head and as "one of the acutest thinkers and stoutest leaders among the workmen of his time," arranged a delegate

meeting of cotton operatives from England, Scotland and Ireland in December, 1829, at Ramsey, in the Isle of Man, which set up a short-lived national organization of cotton spinners. This society was strong enough in 1830 to induce the boroughreeve and constables of Manchester to write in alarm



LORD ASHLEY, SEVENTH EARL OF
SHAFTESBURY, IN EARLY LIFE

From an Engraving after the Drawing by James Slater.

to the home secretary, but it seems to have disappeared early in the next year. Before that, however, Doherty had established the National Association for the Protection of Labour, an expansion of the plan of the cotton spinners, which soon included 150 separate unions, mostly in the north-west and in the midlands. It was to resist reductions in wages but not to strike for increases, and for a time it spread and flourished. Yet its performance was unequal to its promise. It started a successful weekly paper, it supported the movement in favour

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of Sadler's Factory Bill, and then it mysteriously faded away. In any case it should be noted that it was a union of societies belonging to different trades, not a union of the individual workers in separate trades.

Then Robert Owen comes prominently into the movement; towards the end of 1833 he was announcing a vast organization, bringing changes which were to "come suddenly upon society like a thief in the night." This body was the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, formed early in 1834, which spread with unexampled rapidity, sometimes absorbing, as branches, societies already existing, but also establishing up and down the country innumerable new lodges. It was an unwieldy body, which by the highest gifts of statesmanship could scarcely have been so organized as to become an effective instrument for its purpose, a national strike of all wage-earners which was to paralyse industry and by one blow secure from employers all the good things desired by workmen everywhere.

Ministers, already scared by movements towards union in various trades, more particularly the building trades, sought in alarm for some means of checking what seemed to them a monstrous and evil growth. They were advised to pass drastic measures against combination.

Melbourne, hostile as he had been to the labourers' revolt, had learnt something during the struggle for the Reform Bill, and was convinced of the impolicy of new legislation which would have been "a serious infringement upon the constitutional liberties of the country." A means of attack was

discovered in the existing law. One of the features of the new society was a fantastic ritual of admission, and members took an oath on initiation. In March, 1834, six labourers of Tolpuddle, in Dorsetshire, were sentenced to seven years' transportation for administering illegal oaths, under a statute intended to meet not an industrial but a political danger.

Strangely, this miscarriage of justice revived the flagging energies of the Grand National, which exerted itself nobly, though without avail, to secure the reversal of these sentences. The labourers were hurried out of the country with indecent speed, but working-class and Radical agitation was so strong that in 1836 the labourers were pardoned and were in the end brought home at the public expense. Meantime the Grand National, weakened by many costly and fruitless sectional disputes, was breaking up; "the leaders and generals of this quickly inflated army" found that by August, 1834, they were "left deserted and alone upon the field." What was left of the Grand National passed down into one of Owen's utopian associations, and the organizers of the wage-workers, learning to distrust short cuts to the millennium, returned to more humdrum methods under less hasty leaders.

If parliament had shown less indignation than might have been expected against the hard lot of the factory children, or the harsh treatment of the respectable Tolpuddle labourers struggling in all innocence for something less than a living wage, it did better justice to its conscience in August, 1833, when



Political Union badge, worn in the procession of the Trades Union by the members to present their petition at the House of Commons, 1832.

From the actual badge (Historical Port-folio, 1832) in the British Museum.

ABOLITION OF WEST INDIAN SLAVERY

it passed an act for the abolition of slavery. Since January 1st, 1808, the slave trade had been illegal, and since 1811 it had been a felony to engage in it. But the abolition of the trade did not sweep away slavery, it merely cut off the supply of African slaves. The great West Indian sugar plantations were still worked by slave labour. No re-

seemed such a monstrous evil that only the total and immediate prohibition of it could purge the public conscience.

Public indignation against the planters, not merely for their cruelty to the slaves, but on account of the ill-treatment of a missionary called Smith, gave strength to the case of the abolitionists.



WELLINGTON'S PROTEST AGAINST THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The Duke of Wellington joined in a protest against the West India Slavery (Abolition) Bill, September 3rd, 1833, on the ground that the slaves were unprepared for their new social position. Wilberforce pointed out in reply that emancipation alone would prepare them.

From a Satirical Print, 1833, in the British Museum.

sponsible person pretended in 1833 to defend the system. Slavery once established is, however, an evil difficult to cure without creating new evils in its place, and there were two views as to the safest means of bringing it to an end. On the one side there were those who held that before freedom could come to the negro as other than a delusive gift he ought to be "educated up to it"; on the other side were the abolitionists, led in the Commons by Thomas Fowell Buxton and outside its walls by Zachary Macaulay, father of the historian, to whom slavery

The colonial office failed in all attempts to secure better regulation of the plantations. And it is perhaps not unimportant to add that the declining prosperity of the once powerful "sugar," or West India, interest in the city rendered politicians less afraid than they had formerly been of passing legislation in opposition to the wishes of the planters, who had failed to put their own house in order, and could no longer be protected against the popular clamour for abolition. When Stanley became colonial secretary in 1833 he pro-

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posed abolition, subject to two conditions: a preliminary term of "apprenticeship" for the emancipated slaves to their former owners as a preparation for unrestricted freedom, and a loan to the planters to tide them over the economic transition from slave labour to wage-paid labour.

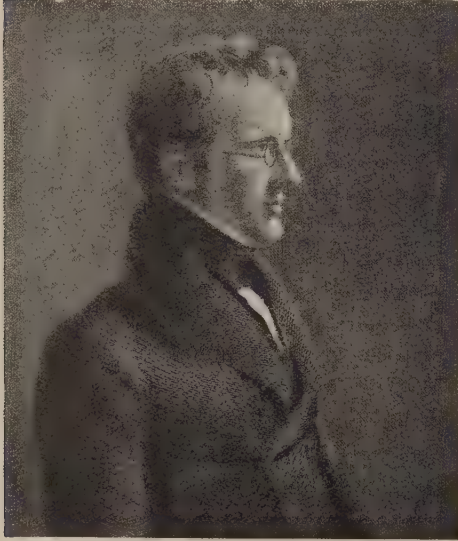
This was a compromise. It satisfied neither the abolitionists, who wanted immediate and unconditional emancipation,

nation salved its conscience, amidst loud self-laudations, for "something less than ten shillings in the pound."

Slave and planter alike were treated more tenderly, however, than the English poor. The chaotic poor law had broken down under recent strains. It imposed a crushing burden upon ratepayers, and it tended to create poverty rather than to cure it. This was due mainly to two causes: to the lack of central direction or control, and to the allowance system, widely adopted during the later years of the eighteenth century. This system had been instituted with the most humane intentions, but its effect—like that of several variants upon it—had been to depress the level of wages. When wages were habitually supplemented by allowances from the poor-rates neither employers nor employed felt any compulsion to maintain them at, or above, the level of subsistence. Labour became a charge upon the rates, and therefore upon every independent ratepayer, whether he employed labour or not. As wages fell, rates rose; the independent labourer was gradually depressed to the level of his dependent fellows, and they in turn became more and more completely pauperized.

In 1832 a commission of inquiry was appointed. Upon its report was founded Lord Althorp's Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Parishes were to be grouped, for poor law purposes, in unions governed by boards of elected guardians. A central body of commissioners was to control these local authorities, was to issue for their guidance rules of administration having the force of law, and was to supervise generally the work of public assistance.

A vigorous attack was made upon the evils of the old system. It was laid down as a maxim in the report of 1834 that the condition of the pauper should not be made "really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class." The commissioners intended to apply this doctrine by abolishing outdoor relief for able-bodied men, and by making the alternative of the workhouse as disagreeable as possible. The act, as one administrator put it, was to be "physic" for "an



SIR THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON

From the Engraving by J. Brain, after the Painting by Sir G. Hayter, in the British Museum.

nor the planters, who claimed compensation for the loss of a valuable property. The ministry conceded something to both parties; the period of apprenticeship was reduced from twelve years to seven, and a sum of £20,000,000 was voted from the public funds as compensation to the planters. This vote has sometimes been called an act of quixotic benevolence. But the value of the slaves has been estimated at from £40,000,000 to £50,000,000. True, the apprenticeship plan was to give the planters the services of their ex-slaves for three-quarters of their time for seven years. But, as apprenticeship proved unworkable and subsequently broke down, there seems to be force in Professor Egerton's view that the

WHIG TREATMENT OF IRISH PROBLEMS

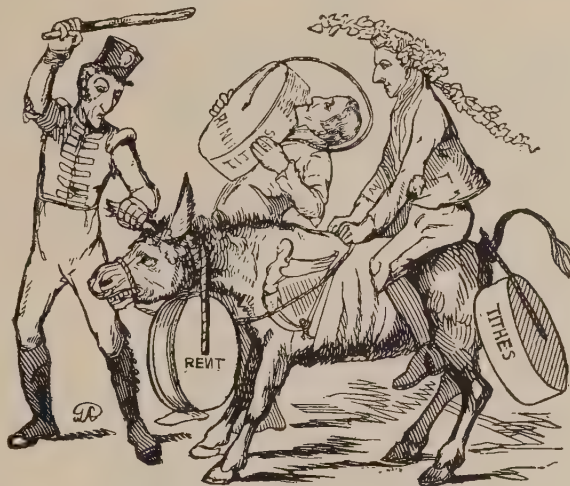
acknowledged evil." And it did impose a salutary check upon the excesses of the allowance system.

This "physic" was in many respects wholesome. But in numerous instances its immediate effect was to inflict severe hardships upon the helpless poor. It is true that the commissioners were mistaken in reporting (1839) that their orders had been successful in prohibiting outdoor relief to able-bodied men, for in many unions it was permitted under conditions, and in many more exceptions were admitted to the rule. The abolition of outdoor relief has never been universally attempted, much less universally enforced. Yet there is truth in the contention that the new measures of restriction were too suddenly and too harshly applied. Many rural parishes were thereby saved or rescued from bankruptcy, but at a terrible cost to the miserable labourers. The act was condemned by men as different in temperament and opinion as Cobbett and Disraeli. Cobbett called it the "poor man's robbery bill." "This act," said Disraeli, "has disgraced this country more than any other upon record. Both a moral crime and a political blunder, it announces to the world that in England poverty is a crime."*

Compromise was part of the Whig temperament. Whigs looked upon all differences as divinely ordained in order that they might be split. This temperament suited England, where such compromises were understood. In Ireland it led to disaster. During a visit in 1825 Cobden had described it as "the land of poverty, ignorance, and misrule." Even Dublin, with its fine streets and harbour, was scarcely animated by trade or commerce. "Whilst there is so little circulation in the heart," he adds,

* Speech at Maidstone, July 3rd, 1837. Monypenny's *Disraeli*, iii, 374. The report of 1834, the act of 1834, and the orders of the poor-law commissioners are analysed by S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law Policy*, pp. 1-88.

"can it be wondered at that the extremities are poor and destitute?" The unimaginative Whigs were pitifully helpless in their treatment of Irish problems. The two recurrent English feelings towards Ireland, sympathy and distrust, were represented in the Grey cabinet, even in the very men who had to govern Ireland—Anglesey, the lord lieutenant, and Stanley, the chief secretary. "Lord



THE IRISH TITHE BILL OF THE TORIES

Ireland is depicted as an ass overburdened with millstones of tithes, and refusing to go any farther. Peel pretends to relieve her by shifting the load from her tail to her neck and calling it rent. Lord Lieutenant Haddington, the rider, is wearing a wreath of shamrock; and Wellington, with the strong hand of power and the sceptre of prerogative, his favourite weapon, employs coercion.

From the Cartoon by Robert Seymour in "Figaro in London,"
March 28th, 1835.

Anglesey and I do very well together as companions," said Stanley, "but we differ so totally about Ireland that *I never mention the subject to him*!" Ireland was hot with agitation: O'Connell, whom the Whigs conciliated while they needed his votes for the Reform Bill, was engaged in almost perpetual war with Dublin Castle; and the forces of disorder were so strong that it was difficult to keep the peace through the ordinary machinery of the law. This led to repeated demands for measures of coercion. Anglesey was for concession before coercion; Stanley for coercion before concession, "a quick alternation of kicks and kindness." He

coupled a very moderate reform, designed to get rid of the church-rate, odious in England and still more odious in Ireland, with a severe coercion bill, a kick so vigorous that it blunted any Irish perception of the alternate kindness. It would be hard to say whether the Irish or Stanley rejoiced most when a

was enough to alarm the friends of the Church, who were still more alarmed when Russell declared that he was in favour of the re-appropriation of its Irish revenues, which he thought too large. "Johnny has upset the coach," wrote Stanley to Graham.

Stanley was right. He unsuccessfully opposed in the cabinet a commission of inquiry into the revenues of the Irish Church, and resigned, along with Graham, who mattered, and Richmond and Ripon (Goderich), who did not. This was a disaster, and the ministry got into further difficulty by trying to bargain with O'Connell, who was promised that there should be no renewal of coercion if he would allow the Tithe Bill to pass. The cabinet seems to have understood the bargain imperfectly, and when a coercion bill was introduced, O'Connell revealed the bargain. Althorp felt that his honour was involved and refused to be a party to coercion after the pledge to O'Connell. Grey decided that he could not go on without Althorp's help. He was old and weary; his work was done. Only too glad to escape to his beloved Northumberland and his family circle, Grey resigned. But the Tories were not yet ready for office, and the ministry was reconstructed under Melbourne, who now began, though slowly, to reveal his strength. Althorp, after all, remained to help him, partly through Grey's urging. A mild coercion bill, modified to suit Althorp, was carried, along with the Tithe Bill, modified to suit O'Connell. The Lords accepted coercion but rejected the Tithe Bill, and thus Ireland got the kick without the kindness. Indeed, partly through weakness and partly through want of a clear policy, the Whigs had contrived to discredit themselves with both friend and foe.

The ministry was now at the mercy of any accident. In November, 1834, the accident happened, the removal of Althorp to the Lords on the death of his father, Earl Spencer. Melbourne went to see the king and explained the difficulty which the ministry found in replacing Althorp as leader of the Commons. The conversation was a frank discussion, but the king took it as an offer of resignation and agreed that he must see Wellington. It is by no means clear that the ministry would



WHO KILLED SIR BOBBY?

Lord John Russell is represented as the real cause of Peel's failure to retain office after the election of January, 1835.

From the Cartoon by Robert Cruikshank in "The Satirist," June 28th, 1835.

cabinet shuffle made it possible to promote Stanley to the colonial office in 1833.

One of the most pressing of Catholic grievances was the tithe. We have seen that the English farmer chafed at it as a harsh exaction. To the Irish Catholic it was not merely a vexatious impost but a hateful tribute to an alien Church. By 1838 it could no longer be collected, even with government assistance, and it was proposed to reduce it by a fifth while converting it into a land-tax. This was cold comfort, for it would, in fact, have converted a tottering system into a firm one, and O'Connell denounced the plan as fraudulent. But it

PEEL'S TAMWORTH MANIFESTO

have come to an end if the news had not appeared in *The Times* before any member of the cabinet, except Brougham, who had accompanied Melbourne, was aware of what had happened. *The Times* represented the ministry as having been dismissed by the king, adding, "the queen has done it all." Brougham was suspected of this breach of confidence and of making these false insinuations, a suspicion which has never been satisfactorily removed.

Peel was in Italy, but Wellington for a few weeks acted as first lord of the treasury and all three secretaries of State, until Peel, who had been summoned in haste, could get home. When he reached London, Peel formed an administration, but as Graham and Stanley refused to join him it was not a strong one. Peel himself thought that a Tory ministry was premature, and he was right. Only a very successful general election could enable him to retain office, and though he gained strength by the election of January, 1835, he did not secure an absolute majority over the other parties in the House of Commons. A combination of Whigs, Radicals, and O'Connellites could at any moment overthrow him.

The three groups did not long resist the temptation.* Peel was twice defeated on a Tithe Bill, not radically different from that of the Whigs, save that it commuted the tithe at three-quarters instead of four-fifths of its value, and substituted for it a rent-charge in place of the land-tax of the earlier bill. On April the 7th he decided to resign, and Melbourne was recalled, less than five months after leaving office.

The significance of the Peel ministry lies neither in what it did nor in what it failed to do, but in the fact that it marks an important stage in party reconstruction. Peel had been slowly and painfully building up the new Conservative party on the ruins of the old Tory party, which had crumbled beneath the weight of Catholic emancipation and the Reform Act. He had seen that it needed time to grow and to adapt itself to the changed conditions of parliamentary life. Peel had fought the Reform Bill, but he accepted it as the inevit-

able foundation of a new order. He was determined that it should work, and he deserves to share with the Whigs the credit for whatever success it may have achieved as an instrument of government. He had frequently refused to embarrass the Grey ministry by captious opposition, and himself disapproved of the ejection of Melbourne in 1834. But the election of 1835 gave him



LORD MELBOURNE

From the Painting by J. Partridge, in the National Portrait Gallery.

an opportunity to define his position. His address to his constituents at Tamworth, known as the Tamworth Manifesto, in which he preached the gospel of Conservative reform, is the charter of the modern Conservative party. He was, said Peel in that address, "for reforming every institution that really required reform; but gradually, dispassionately, and deliberately, that the reform might be lasting."

If one adds that Peel realized, as the Whigs never did, the importance of sound finance and of efficient administration—often more important than those "stacks of statutes" of which the quaint old Tudor administrator had complained—then Peel's great cabinet of 1841 is here in

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the germ. And while Peel was thinking of government, the Tapers and the Tadpoles of his party were learning a new craft in the conduct of elections, and in their way adapting themselves to the new order.

When Melbourne returned to office in 1835, Brougham was not included in the ministry, and the cabinet was more homo-

it was often tottering, and whatever vitality it possessed was soon exhausted. But in one important respect it was able to complete the great work of political reconstruction begun by Grey.

Reform of the boroughs was an essential corollary to reform of parliament. As early as 1833 the Whigs had appointed a commission of inquiry to survey the ground. Its



BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL, 1834

From the Engraving (1919-8-13-2) in the Topographical Portfolio, British Museum.

geneous and more harmonious than Grey's had ever been. Creevey remarks on the curious fact that he finds "Melbourne and the leavings of Lord Grey's government . . . to be much stronger than Lord Grey's government when it was at its best." In its early days this seems certainly to have been true. Some of its strength is perhaps attributable to the ripening of Melbourne's own powers under the stimulus of responsibility. But the cynical may be tempted to suggest that the absence of Brougham had something to do with the fact that the second cabinet of Melbourne was stronger than the first. Its strength was, however, only comparative; it was never powerful and never distinguished;

secretary and mainspring was Joseph Parkes, a clever young Birmingham solicitor, already a convinced advocate of municipal reform. The detailed reports of the commissioners are carefully compiled and are full of valuable information. But the general report, not always based upon them, is less scrupulous and more sweeping in character, since it is a deliberate attempt to prove that close corporations are always evil, and that sovereign virtue resides in the elective system.

As we have seen, this is not a safe generalization, however comforting it may be in the modern world to accept it as universal truth. But the partisan report

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT

of the commission served a useful purpose, for it was true that the municipal system needed to be re-shaped and to be given a new elasticity in order that it might meet new wants for which its haphazard growth had not fitted it. Some boroughs, mere electoral machines under the unreformed franchise, were not worth keeping alive

care or judgment : unsuitable areas, illiterate magistrates or municipal officers, powers absurdly great in the case of chartered villages and unduly small in the case of great towns, differences between the economic area and the corresponding area of local government, instances in which the burgesses of a port with ancient boundaries, narrowly



THE EXCHANGE, WITH ST. ANN'S SQUARE, MANCHESTER, 1808

From an old Print.

when the nomination system was destroyed ; in others large communities were governed by small oligarchies ; in others again the resident freemen were outnumbered by the non-residents, and the true population of the borough had to be restored to its rights ; in others still the freemen were monopolists of valuable privileges, at the expense of the community ; and in some there was gross maladministration of large revenues from which the public received few or none of the advantages and services of which it was in urgent need.

On such matters the commissioners dwelt with ill-concealed glee. More serious defects they did not always point out with equal

drawn, were able to tyrannize, to their own profit, over the busy traders of the surrounding neighbourhood.

To be efficient organs of local government the municipalities needed adjustment to the changed distribution of population ; the economic unit needed to have some reasonable relation to the unit of government. Most of all it was necessary that the great aggregations of population in the new, unchartered towns should have some means of acquiring the municipal organization which was essential to their ordered life and government.

Some of these things the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 brought to pass,

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others it did not achieve, and some portions of the economic problem it left unsolved to baffle us still. But the act substantially fulfilled the prayer of the Liverpool merchants, in their petition to parliament in 1835, "that all in equal stations should enjoy equal privileges and be subjected to equal duties." The frame of the new municipalities was established much in the form in which we know it to-day, with councillors chosen by the citizens, and aldermen chosen by the councillors, in the proportion of three councillors to one alderman. The "self-creative and self-elective" corporations, which were the bugbear of the commissioners, were, with due regard to the rights of certain freemen, ruthlessly swept aside. Machinery was provided for giving municipal government to new towns. The framers of the act were much criticized at the time for their failure to give corporate privileges to the great unchartered towns like Sheffield and Birmingham in the act itself. Cobden was still asking, two years later, how much longer Manchester was to be governed from

Rolleston Hall in Staffordshire. But it has in the long run proved advantageous that the legislators of 1835 looked to the future and made it possible to provide for the needs of new urban areas as they grew and came to require municipal institutions.

The act has proved to be one of the most successful in our history, and the powers of the new councils, at first to our eyes strangely narrow, were increased as they proved their usefulness, and are still increasing. The bill was opposed as a violation of chartered rights. But Peel refused to countenance indiscriminate criticism or any obstructive opposition, as he refused to sustain the amendments by which the Lords strove to mangle the bill. He stood to the principles of the Tamworth Manifesto and supported conservative reform. He aided the Whigs in resisting most of the Lords' amendments, and with his assistance the Lords were compelled to pass, substantially unchanged, the measure which placed the crown upon the work begun by Grey when he planned the Reform Act.



BURNING OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, OCTOBER 16, 1834

Reproduced, by permission, from a Woodcut (No. 734), dated October 17th, 1834, in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.



SEAL OF QUEEN VICTORIA, 1837

This, the second seal, displays on the *obverse* the figures of Justice and Religion. For the first time since the second seal of Henry VIII (1536) there appears a carved Gothic canopy. The two side niches, also canopied, each contain a figure on a carved pedestal—that of a saint on the right, that of an archbishop on the left. Queen Victoria's first seal was that of William IV, unaltered.

CHAPTER VII

OLD WHIGS AND NEW CONSERVATIVES (1835-41)

IN retrospect the years between 1830 and 1835 seem to have some of the qualities of an heroic age. Not that the Whigs themselves were ever heroic: they were merely the channel for a great outpouring of long-pent national energy. And in 1835 the national energy was not yet fully spent, though the Whigs were an exhausted force. As a party they had reached the high-water mark of their vigour with the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act. The two splendid achievements which belong to the period of their decline were the work of two individuals—of Durham, who laid the foundations of a new colonial policy by his work in Canada, and of Melbourne, who found in the political and constitutional schooling of the young Queen Victoria, who ascended the throne in 1837, a task which called forth his highest powers and went far to justify him as a statesman.

Young Disraeli had already poked amusing fun at the enfeebled Whigs, in an election

speech at High Wycombe, which he thought good enough to publish, in 1835. He compared ministers to the team of Mr. Ducrow, the circus-rider, "that celebrated gentleman who rides upon six horses," until by one casualty after another the horses fall ill and are replaced by humbler animals. "Behold," he said, "the late prime minister and the Reform ministry—the spirited and snow-white steeds have gradually changed into an equal number of sullen and obstinate donkeys!" while the merryman, who, like Brougham, "was once the very life of the ring, now lies his despairing length in the middle of the stage, his jokes exhausted and his bottle empty!" Disraeli spoke during the interval between the first Melbourne cabinet and the second, and it is fair to say that he had been equally nasty to Wellington during his anxious wait for Peel's return from Italy, when he had written that the duke's was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the—Lords."

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But there was just truth enough in Disraeli's jests to poison the darts.

A defence would have been possible if the Whigs had known what to do and had shown the will to do it, for the most urgent political and constitutional reforms had been

be stout for a tried constitutional maxim, but he was apt to be impervious to a new economic idea. Earl Grey himself looked upon his son's free-trade opinions as a tiresome malady of youth. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Whigs failed to com-

plete their work of political reconstruction by the revised system of taxation and finance which ought to have been its complement. Even on traditional lines they did not achieve success. Althorp, one of the best leaders of the house that the Commons ever had, was one of the least competent chancellors who ever sat at the exchequer. Finance, in its broader sense, was foreign to his mind, and even when he essayed reform he was so unlucky in his proposals that he accomplished nothing by them.

There can be no doubt that when the Whigs came to power the finances were in a deplorable state: the tariff was a maze of entanglements, self-defeating in its complexity; and it was a hard task to balance revenue and expenditure. Althorp had made his mark in the Commons partly by his bold advocacy of economy, and while the Whigs were in opposition they made criticism of expenditure a constant theme of their attacks upon the ministry. But these attacks had taken effect before they came into office. The Tories had done their best to prune down all unnecessary expenditure; and so long as ideas of economy do not go beyond the simple plan of refraining from spending money the limits of cheese-paring are soon reached. Althorp found himself, therefore, in the position of a man who has

to shave what is left from a rind that has already been closely pared. He did succeed in saving a million pounds in his first budget. But the most uncompromising advocates of retrenchment, especially in regard to official salaries, abate their zeal when the plums are in the gift of their own friends, and the Whigs were by no means so eager to save the nation's money when they had the spending of it as they had been when that delight was a Tory monopoly. Ministers were em-



BENJAMIN DISRAELI AS A YOUNG MAN

From the Drawing by "Alfred Croquis" (Daniel Maclise, R.A.) in "Fraser's Magazine," 1833.

carried. In England, at least, the need was now for administrative reorganization and for the overhauling of national finance in order to find necessary revenue by means which imposed fewer checks upon industrial and commercial enterprise. But since Burke had provided the party with a body of doctrine the Whig genius had been more often abstract than practical. The Whig could grasp a principle better than he could handle the journeywork of daily business; he could

ALTHORP AT THE EXCHEQUER

barrassed by some of their own supporters who had halloed most loudly for cutting down expenditure. Creevey, the zealot, is comical in his rage. He relates with fury how a "damned retrenching committee have docked my office of £200 a year . . . If Earl Grey does not get me back my £200 a year as treasurer—I'll eat him." And one of Grey's last thoughts, before leaving office, was to arrange for Creevey's retirement to a snug permanency at £600 a year, with coals and candles.

restrictions in which he was supposed to believe. Caught between the opposing fires of the agricultural members and of the industrial interests, he was in an unhappy situation.

In spite of Althorp's opposition the county members had succeeded, in 1833, in making the agricultural interest a present of half the malt-tax, to the discontentment of the towns. In 1834 he himself abolished the house-tax, whereat the towns were pleased and the counties were discontented. Some



THE GREAT COMET OF 1835, WITH ITS PORTENTOUS TAIL

O'Connell is grinning in exultation at the political constellations in whose orbits he has excited no little commotion. William IV is figured as *Leo Major*; Queen Adelaide as *Leo Minor*; Stanley as *Cancer* or the *Crab*; Londonderry as *Orion*; Brougham as *Canis Major*; Peel and Wellington as the *Gemini*; Eldon as the *Noctua* or night-bird; Abinger as a *Serpent*. The mysterious boot belonging to Wellington suggests a pair of *Boötes*, the remainder of which cannot be seen.

From a Cartoon in "Figaro in London," June 13th, 1835.

Althorp found himself anticipated, then, by his enemies and hampered by his friends, and did well to save at all. But his idea of economy was on the whole restricted to cutting down expenditure, and his scope was narrow. He did at first attempt a bold budget. He tried to abolish a number of burdensome but not very productive duties, but his proposals for finding new revenue were ill received, and he did not persist in them. His later budgets showed the same inability to find the new and more elastic source of income that would have enabled him to embark on the larger schemes for simplifying the tariff and removing trade

of these resentments were unreasonable if not discreditable, but they were provoked by Althorp's hand-to-mouth methods. Yet a comprehensive reformation was more than he could compass, for there was too much "agricultural mind" in the Whig cabinet and among the rank and file of its adherents to assure him of the support that would have been necessary to carry such a drastic revision of the incidence of taxation as might have relieved the overburdened poor on the one hand or removed artificial barriers against the free development of trade and industry on the other. Sharp antagonisms between land and industry were beginning to

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IRELAND'S BIG BEGGARMAN

O'Connell, after organizing the great Catholic Rent for the cause of Catholic Emancipation, was presented with a national testimonial. This was followed by collections for the Repeal Fund.

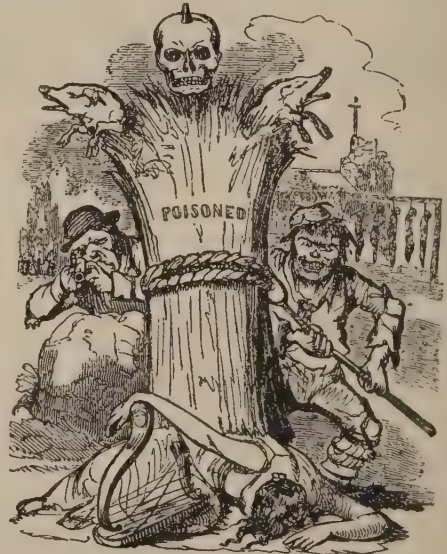
From a Satirical Print, published in 1833.

emerge. For good or ill the country was coming face to face with the choice between the factory and the farm, and it was not in Whiggism to face such a situation with boldness or decision.

Althorp's successors showed as little enterprise or enjoyed as little fortune as he had done. For some years the old bad budgets were repeated. In 1840 the chancellor of the exchequer resorted to the hoary and unprofitable device of attempting to wring from the taxpayer microscopic additions to the revenue by minute additions to the taxes, a policy as uneconomic as it was burdensome. But there were by now men in the cabinet and in the party who saw the evils of the system and wished to abandon it. Baring's budget of 1841 marked the triumph of their views. It was a reversion to the earlier principles of Pitt; an attempt to reduce taxation in such a way as to increase the revenue by making the yield of the taxes more elastic. Baring proposed to rearrange the duties on sugar and timber so as to reduce their average rate and yet, it was hoped,

make them profitable to the exchequer. At the same time it was intended to repeal the sliding scale of duties on corn—notoriously unsuccessful as a measure of protection, yet grievously oppressive to the poor because it exaggerated, instead of checking, the fluctuations in the price of bread—and to substitute for it a fixed duty of eight shillings a quarter.

This was a brave effort so far as it went, but there were many Whigs who still thought, as a modern writer has accused Fox of thinking, that "political economy was a dodge of Pitt's." There may be at least symbolic truth in the story of Melbourne with his back to the door, saying to the cabinet, in reference to the corn duty, "Now, will it make the price of corn go up or down? It does not matter which we say, but we must all say the same." Peel, too, had not yet completed his own conversion to sound economics; still less had he converted the Tory squires to any tampering with the protective duties on corn. The budget was therefore unpopular on both sides of the



TITHES FOR THE IRISH PARSONS

Hibernia is crushed beneath the burden of oppressive tithes. Marked "poisoned," these tithes are being prepared for the "cormorants of the Church" by two Irish labourers.

From a Caricature in "Figaro in London," October 6th, 1832.

IRELAND THE SPORT OF ENGLISH PARTIES

house, and it brought about a defeat of the government which prepared the way for its fall.

The Whigs were not more successful in their dealings with Ireland than in their management of finance. The problem of the tithes was still unsettled. The ministry tried to solve it on the lines of the rejected bill of Peel's cabinet. But coupled with the commutation of tithes was a plan, embodied in the so-called "appropriation clauses," for impounding some of the superfluous revenues of the Irish Church and diverting them "to the promotion of religious and moral education in Ireland." Peel wished to divide the bill, offering to support that part of it which might have put an end to the tithe war. But the Whigs unwisely refused to separate appropriation from the tithe question. They carried the bill in the Commons. The Lords divided it, and threw out appropriation; then the Whigs withdrew the whole bill rather than abandon the principle to which they had pledged themselves. This was a mistake, for the tithe question was urgent, and appropriation, though desirable, could have been postponed without serious harm. Even on minor Irish questions the Whigs were rebuffed in the Lords: a bill for applying the principles of Peel's own police system to Ireland—the Dublin Police Bill—was rejected. It seemed as if a measure needed only to be called Irish in order that it might be lost, for twice the Lords refused to pass a bill for extending with necessary modifications the principle of the Municipal Corporations Act to Ireland.

Irish Poor Law

The same evil fortune which followed Irish legislation throughout the century came near to preventing a very necessary measure of relief for the Irish poor. The misery and distress in Ireland was a matter of common agreement between all parties. It was generally admitted that something must be done. Grey had appointed an Irish commission of inquiry in 1833, which had confirmed the prevalent impression of the wretched condition of the poor, but it had reported against a poor-law. The ministry rejected the report, and sent Nicholls, a

Scotsman in the English poor-law service, to investigate conditions in Ireland. He confirmed the findings of the commission in regard to the prevalence of distress, but he reported in favour of an Irish poor-law on the English model. This report was accepted; the verdict of an English civil servant was preferred to that of a commission of Irishmen. He was probably right and they were probably wrong. But none the less legislation on a subject with which it has never been easy to deal was quite needlessly encumbered by national prejudice. In 1838 a bill on the lines of Nicholls's report was, with some amendments, carried into law, but the taint of a grievance was attached to it. The poor-law was unpopular in Ireland, and once again it seemed as if acceptable Irish legislation was unobtainable through an English parliament. The operation of the law has been pronounced by an Irish historian to have been on the whole successful, but the feeling remains that if Irishmen had been able to deal with their own social problems they might have handled them differently and with less friction.

Irish Tithes and Municipalities

Everybody was now sick of the wrangle over the tithes and the municipal corporations. Peel and Russell agreed to a compromise in order that something might be done. Russell was to forgo his pet scheme of "appropriation" in return for some concessions in regard to the municipalities. A tax on clerical incomes was substituted for partial disendowment of the Church, and in 1838 the Tithe Bill became law, substantially in the form proposed by the Peel ministry in 1835. It is difficult to escape the dilemma that Russell was either factious in 1835 or feeble in 1838. But Peel's idea of compromise at this date rather took the form of all "take" and no "give." He squabbled, after all, about the Corporations Bill, for he wanted a high franchise and Russell wanted a low one. Twice—in 1838 and again in 1839—Peel destroyed Whig bills with the aid of the Lords. It was not until 1840 that the Irish Corporations Act was passed, and once more, as with the tithes, the measure in its final form resembled the Whig bills less than the

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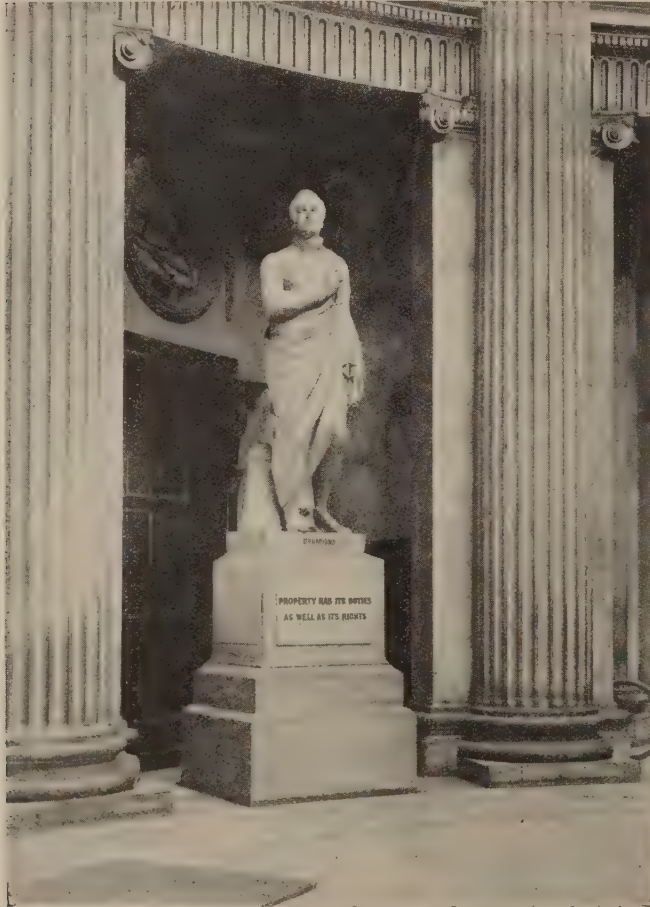
Tory proposals. It seemed, in this decade, as if Ireland were the sport of English parties. It is impossible not to feel the justice of Cobden's strictures on this careless and irresponsible attitude towards Ireland when he censured, in 1835, "the impolicy and

administrative firmness and success. This was due partly to the choice of sensible law-officers, one of the nodal points in Irish administration, as Peel had found when he was chief secretary; partly to Thomas Drummond, a Scottish officer in the Royal

Engineers, who had learnt to know Ireland well while engaged on the ordnance survey, had later been private secretary to Althorp, and on Althorp's recommendation had been made under-secretary at Dublin Castle in 1835. "Before he had been in office two years," records a modern writer, "Drummond had reformed the police, purified the magistracy, rebuked and controlled the Orange temper, and suppressed those faction fights which the Irish peasantry had learnt to regard as a sort of privileged pastime." Nor did he hesitate to tell Irish landlords, whose misdeeds were one of the chief dangers to public order, that property had its duties as well as its rights. Drummond wore himself out in the service of Ireland, and when disease overtook him his exhausted frame was unable to battle against it. He died in 1840, when not yet forty-three, "doing his country," said Althorp, "as great good as any man ever effected."

Amongst the maladies which afflicted the Whigs

was a distressing habit of pushing to an extreme the scriptural injunction against letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing. It was illustrated in Ireland, where they administered well and legislated ill, and in England, where they administered worst at the very time when they were legislating best.



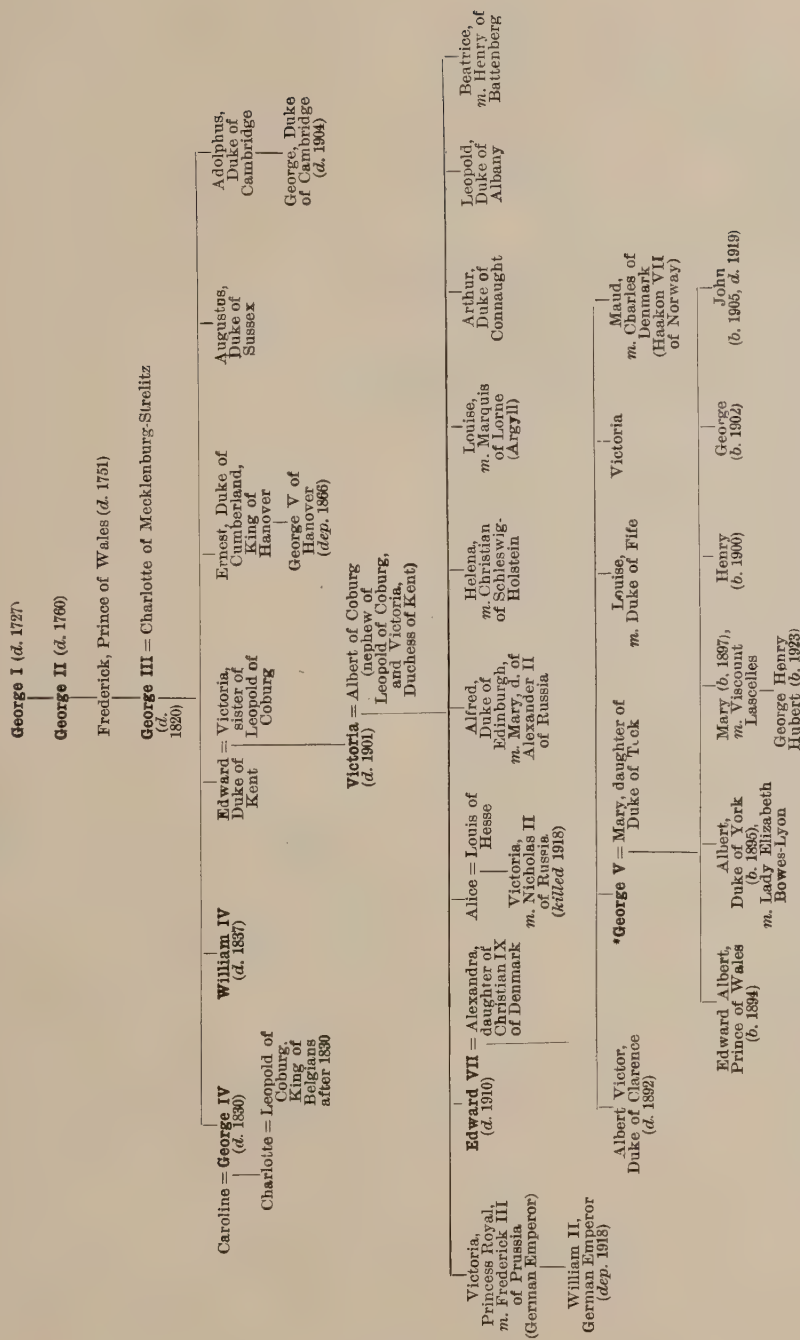
THOMAS DRUMMOND

From the Statue in the City Hall, Dublin.

injustice of the statesmen who have averted their faces from this diseased member of the body politic; and at the same time have led us, thus maimed, into the midst of every conflict that has occurred on the continent of Europe."

Luckily, legislative failure was redeemed during the second Melbourne ministry by

THE HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK-HANOVER AND CONNEXIONS



* In 1917, by royal proclamation, the House of Windsor was formally declared to be the name of King George V and his descendants.

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THE NEW STAMP ACT

With the newspaper stamp duty reduced to a penny the freedom of the Press is still fettered.

From the Cartoon by Robert Seymour in "Figaro in London," April 16th, 1836.

The most striking example of their defect is to be found in their treatment of popular education, where they may be said to have taken away with one hand while they gave with the other. In 1833 they had made a grant of £20,000 towards the building of elementary schools, the money being spent through the two rival societies which had been the pioneers of education for the children of the people. One select committee after another had since discussed the relation of the State to education, but nothing had come of their inquiries and debates but unheeded reports.

Many Whigs were lukewarm on the subject; and Melbourne, in his cynical playfulness, made light of education, "because the Pagets got on so damned well without it." Even Cobbett held views on the question which were peculiar in a Radical, and very different from those of his fellow-Radical Place, who was as zealous for popular education as he was for reform, if, indeed, the two things were not, in his mind, interdependent. Cobbett's ideal was not very far removed from the practical method of Mr. Squeers, a little more humanely construed; for the rest, he would probably have been

satisfied if the working man could read the *Political Register* and do a little necessary figuring; and so far any man worth his salt could, as Cobbett himself had done, show that he was his own best teacher.

With the Radicals divided and the prime minister indifferent, the Whigs were not likely to do anything heroic. But in 1839 Lord John Russell was able to increase the grant for education to thirty thousand pounds—less than half the cost of the queen's coronation. More important than this paltry grant, still to be used only for the building of schools which were afterwards to be maintained by voluntary effort, was the arrangement by which the administration of the money was placed in the hands of a committee of the privy council, the humble beginning of a great department of the State. But these timid measures were not carried without opposition. The cry was raised that the Church was in danger; hence Russell's proposals were only passed on condition that the committee's inspectors should report to the bishops as well as to their department.

It comes as a shock to find that Disraeli



OPPRESSION OF THE PRESS

The reduction to one penny is regarded as a suitable instrument for driving home to the government the necessity for total abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers.

From the Cartoon by Robert Seymour in "Figaro in London," May 21st, 1836.

STAMP DUTY ON NEWSPAPERS

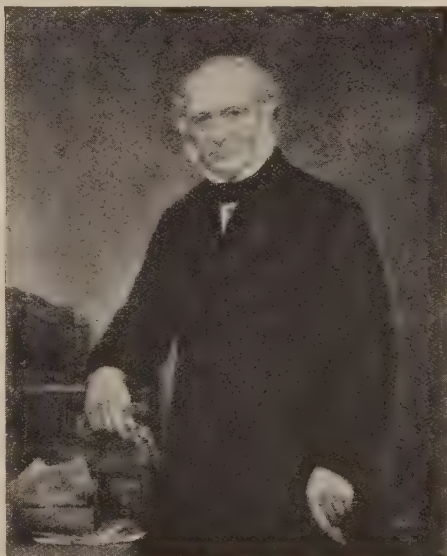
and Gladstone were at one in resisting this timid educational advance. He was an advocate, said Disraeli, "for national education, but it did not follow that he should be an advocate for State education": he feared the uniformity of a mint from which "all would come out with the same impress and superscription"; he dreaded a system which might be made the disciplinary instrument of paternal government. "It had been discovered that the best way to ensure implicit obedience was to commence tyranny in the nursery." There are countries, as we now realize, in which the danger foreseen by Disraeli has been no mere chimera, but in England even a modified system of national education was almost a generation distant, and Disraeli, with his eyes set on the more remote danger, was forgetting the nearer risk of an uneducated democracy. Yet even this pothole about the insignificant dole which was given to shelve a national responsibility seems less strange than was Gladstone's objection to Russell's scheme as an infringement "of the principle on which the Established Church was founded—that of confining the primary support of the State to one particular denomination."

Meantime political education, at least, had received a set-back. One of the imposts which the Radicals called taxes on knowledge had been mended for the worse. Among the sources of public revenue was a stamp duty on newspapers and periodicals. This interfered comparatively little with the newspapers and reviews of the comfortable classes, though it was an odd mental perversion to boast of the freedom of the Press whilst making it dear. But the stamp was a severe hindrance to the growth of those newspapers which alone the poor could afford to buy.

Fortunately the law had been strictly enforced only at intervals and had frequently been evaded in wholesale fashion. Francis Place, for instance, had been concerned in the publication of a weekly unstamped pamphlet with a circulation of ten thousand copies—large figures in those days for even a thriving paper. But now and then an organized attack had been made on the un-

stamped press, such as that made upon the publications of Hetherington and Richard Carlile, who came to be regarded as heroes in a popular cause.

Now there is, it is plain, some reason in the contention that statutes should either be enforced or repealed. In 1836 the Whigs tackled the problem of the unstamped press. But, instead of repealing the duty outright, they did just what reformers had



SIR ROWLAND HILL

From the Painting by J. A. Vinter, in the National Portrait Gallery.

feared, and re-enacted it in a form which appeared to make its enforcement more reasonable. They reduced the cost of the stamp from fourpence to a penny, and at the same time determined to take stringent measures for checking evasion. It was even proposed, though unsuccessfully, to apply the law to ordinary pamphlets.

The result was a piece of class legislation of the worst kind. The rich man's paper fell in price from sevenpence to fivepence; the poor man's rose from a penny to twopence. And the cheap periodical literature of popular instruction, self-educators and the like, was correspondingly crippled. In spite of vigorous agitation this foolish impost was not removed for twenty years. It is to be

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

remembered that the Press was also taxed through the paper duty, and it is by no means clear that the revenue really benefited by the Stamp Act. Moreover it is arguable that this choking or closing of the channels of popular information and discussion made easy the way of the demagogue, and helped to foster some of the less desirable features of Chartism.

It is fair to say that in matters of domestic

by an act providing for the registration of births, deaths and marriages by lay public officials, which was not merely an important gain from a statistical point of view, but also a useful addition to the machinery for the prevention and detection of crime.

Still more important were the postal reforms of 1839 and 1840. The Post Office did a small business at high prices and without much consideration for public convenience.



1



2

(1) Rowland Hill's triumphal entry into St. Martin's-le-Grand. (2) Britannia presenting Rowland Hill with the sack.

By permission of the proprietors of "Punch."

legislation the Whigs did some good things. In 1836 they settled the tithe question in England by providing for voluntary commutation on a uniform plan, at a rate equal to not less than three-fifths nor more than three-quarters of the gross value of the tithe, reckoned according to its average yield on wheat, barley and oats during the seven preceding years. Before long the commissioners appointed to supervise the working of the act were able to make an award in every parish in England. Another bill of the same year removed a long-standing grievance of the dissenters by enabling them to be married in their own chapels and without publication of banns in the parish church. Roman Catholics, of course, enjoyed the same benefits under the act as Protestant dissenters. This reform was made possible

The post was slow, extravagant and dear. The rate of postage was bristling with anomalies, and varied not merely with the weight of the letter but with the distance which it was carried. The average cost of delivering a letter was a shilling, paid by the recipient and collected at the door. This was an uneconomical system; to the poor it was also a prohibitive one, for in many parts of rural England the daily wage of a labourer was little if anything more than the cost of a letter.

In 1837 Rowland Hill, an ex-schoolmaster, one of the founders of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, issued a pamphlet, called *Post-Office Reform*, in which he advocated a universal penny post between all places in the British Isles; the sender was to pay the postage, and to collect it



NORTH-EAST VIEW OF THE NEW GENERAL POST OFFICE, ST. MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND, WITH THE ROYAL MAILS
 (AND CARTS) PREPARING TO START. DEMOLISHED EARLY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

From the Engraving by H. Pyall, after the Painting by J. Pollard (published 1832), in the Crace Collection, British Museum.

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himself by means of a stamp affixed to each letter before it was posted. Ultimately Hill's plan was adopted, and on January 10th, 1840, the penny post was introduced.

The revenue was not maintained, as Hill had expected, and for a time the reform was costly, but in the long run Hill's predictions were fulfilled, the business of the post office increased beyond even the dreams of reformers; surpluses were earned which made possible fresh improvements or assisted the public revenue. Hill's system may be said without exaggeration to have worked a social and commercial revolution. Yet the Whigs had made these changes reluctantly and after much hesitation under pressure of public opinion, and Sydney Smith, their literary fugleman, had not hesitated to declare that the scheme was "nonsensical." If this was nonsense the modern reader may feel tempted to wish that the Whigs had been more consistently devoted to it. Hill himself was dismissed from the post office in 1842.

Palmerston's Foreign Policy

With the ministry of Earl Grey there began Palmerston's first, and in many ways best, period of office as secretary for foreign affairs, which lasted, save for one brief interval, for almost eleven years. Unlike most of his colleagues, he had one precious advantage, long official experience. For nearly twenty years he had occupied the obscure but not unimportant post of secretary at war, and he was well drilled in habits of business. Palmerston stands for the revival of the Canningite tradition in foreign policy. Once our pressing domestic difficulties had been removed, he stood also for a successful attempt to arouse public interest in continental affairs. In the dead season after 1835 it was probably from his policy that the ministry gained the greatest measure of popular credit. Without sacrificing that British freedom from continental entanglements on which Canning had insisted, he contrived to assert the rights of Great Britain to a voice in those matters which concerned the great European family of nations as a whole. The two guiding principles of his policy were a deep distrust

of Russian aggression—the deeper because Russia was, in his eyes, a reactionary power—and a profound sympathy with those peoples which were struggling to assert their national independence or to secure constitutional freedom.

Palmerston was no democrat; with the exception of Richmond he was probably less friendly to reform than any member of the Reform Bill cabinet. But he was attached to the inherited constitutional and civil liberties of Englishmen, and the national movements in Europe from 1830 to the early 'sixties seemed to him no more than legitimate efforts to secure those advantages which Englishmen had long enjoyed. This belief was shared by most ordinary Englishmen, and Palmerston did his best to sustain it. He kept close—perhaps too close—touch with the newspapers. He was apt to strut in the limelight with his eye on the pit. He was over-fond of acting independently in matters which called for consultation with the cabinet or for the approval of the Crown, to the alarm of his colleagues and, after 1837, to the annoyance of the queen. But he excited the imagination of the people in favour of his policy, and he created a great—perhaps an exaggerated—impression of this power both at home and abroad.*

Situation in Europe

Europe was ranging itself in this period into two hostile camps. On the one side were the three reactionary monarchies, Russia, Prussia and Austria; on the other the two constitutional monarchies, England and France, both, in the continental sense of the word, liberal powers. The schism between these groups was not permanent and invariable, but it was constantly being reopened. When the two western powers acted together the balance of effective strength lay on their side. And Palmerstonism represents the British aspect of the European situation. At the heart of it is the rivalry of Britain and Russia, of Palmerston and the Tsar Nicholas.

It was a fortunate chance which brought

* See the curious reflection of this in Disraeli's *Tancred*.

RECOGNITION OF BELGIAN INDEPENDENCE

foreign affairs under the control of Grey and Palmerston in 1830. Grey had himself held the seals of the foreign office during the few brief months between the death of Fox and the fall of the Grenville cabinet, and, apart from reform, foreign policy was the one subject in which he was deeply interested. That Palmerston "never signed a dispatch that had not been seen and *altered* by Lord Grey," as Creevey asserted, few will believe who have studied the characters of the men concerned; yet there is no reason to question the opinion of Grey's biographer that the prime minister tutored and guided the foreign secretary in his new office. Over Palmerston's restless mind Grey probably exercised the same soothing and restraining influence as, seventy years earlier, had been imposed on the still more adventurous intellect of Burke by the judgment of Lord Rockingham.

Reversal of Wellington's Policy

In 1830 Palmerston and Grey rescued the country from a dangerous policy. In the king's speech, the debate on which had occasioned his famous declaration against all reform, the Duke of Wellington, who had scant toleration for national movements, had made his sovereign express hostility to the rising of the Belgians against the government of the United Netherlands, and "lament that the enlightened administration of the king should not have preserved his dominions from revolt." Happily the duke's successors thought otherwise. They exerted themselves to secure a peaceable fulfilment of Belgian hopes, and before the end of December, 1830, the five great powers had come to an agreement which, in the words of Grey, amounted "to a recognition of the independence of Belgium." "It is a great thing," he added, "to have brought Austria and Russia to concur in such a measure."

Another danger remained. In 1831 the Belgians offered the throne of the new kingdom to a son of Louis Philippe. Most Englishmen would then have agreed that this meant nothing less than union with France, and all the traditions of British policy were opposed to the extension of French influence in the Low Countries. The course of later

history has led us more than once to wonder if they were right, but in 1831 it would have been safer to denounce fox-hunting than to cast a doubt upon this sacred article of the national creed. By a judicious mixture of friendliness and firmness the English ministers induced Louis Philippe to refuse the Belgian crown for his son. A few months later the Belgians chose as their king Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, widower of the Princess Charlotte, who had many friends in England and was the early counsellor of Queen Victoria. And after all a child of Louis Philippe did share the honours, for Leopold shortly afterwards married a daughter of the king of the French. The King of Holland was not easily persuaded to resign the wealthier and more populous half of his dominions, but Grey and Palmerston supported the new kingdom against him, encouraged though he was by the reactionary powers; and in 1832 French and English forces actually co-operated in compelling the Dutch to surrender the citadel of Antwerp to Belgium. A cardinal object of British policy had thus been attained by an honourable agreement between the two ancient rivals without real hurt to the interests of either, and without loss to the Belgians, whose unhappy country has so often been the cockpit of European strife.

Distrust of Russia

Grey shared Palmerston's distrust of Russia and of the Tsar Nicholas, who had done his best to thwart a Belgian settlement. Palmerston had tried to protect the Poles in 1831; he protested in 1832 against the suppression of their constitution by Nicholas, and Grey regretted that Britain had been unable to send a fleet into the Baltic in order to enforce these views at the time of the Polish revolution. In Spain and Portugal Palmerston upheld the constitutional rulers against absolutist pretenders, in the case of Portugal with some effect. And he had fortunately reached office in time to help the Greeks in securing a more generous boundary than they would have been likely to get if Wellington had remained in power. Here the claims of Greece outweighed, in the minds of both Grey and Palmerston, that

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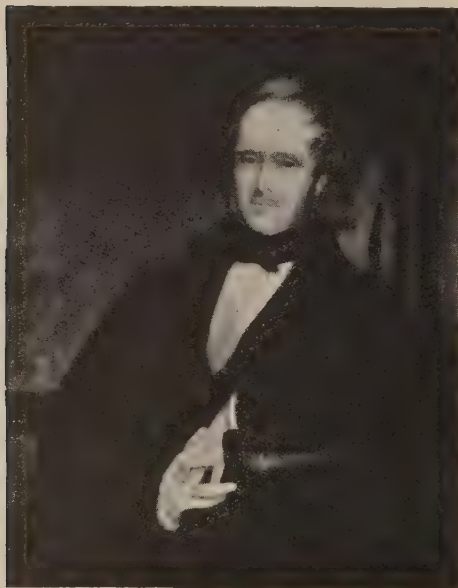
dread of Russian influence which dominated their policy elsewhere.

Once the Greek question was settled at the end of 1832, the problem of the near East began to assume a form in which it is still familiar. Turkey was already the sick man of the East and was unable to control his own vassals. Mehemet Ali, disappointed in the hope of obtaining the Morea, demanded

Dardanelles should be closed to all but Russian warships. It had been well said by the sultan, on accepting the help of Russia, that "a drowning man will grasp at a serpent."

The diplomatic victory of Russia raised the spectre which haunted Palmerston at frequent intervals during the remainder of his diplomatic life. That distrust of Russia, which was shared but controlled by Grey, and remained always at the back if not in the forefront of Palmerston's mind, sometimes gave way to the need for co-operation with the evil power, but sometimes also it rose to the white heat of a fanaticism which passed the bounds of reason. Russian expansion in this period is a fact that needs neither to be insisted upon nor denied, though the territorial advance of Russia in Asia did not increase her strength in proportion to its extent; yet, pictured by the imagination of Palmerston, it became a fearful menace. If it were to be conjoined with a virtual protectorate of Turkey the menace would be doubled. Russia, with access to three seas and with her vast potential armies, would threaten such a European ascendancy as it had been the tradition of British policy to resist. Russia, athwart two of the three main trade routes to India, as she would be if the protectorate became a reality and she succeeded in exercising over the sultan's vassals an authority more effective than his own, would be a danger to the British power in India as well as to British trading interests.

Palmerston could not realize the inevitable force of the pressure which drove Russia towards an outlet upon an open as well as a frozen seaboard, nor did he foresee that in proportion as she felt that her means of access to western Europe were choked she would be driven to become more and more an Asiatic power, and increasingly a rival to British interests in the farther East. He did not view these two tendencies as mutually opposed but as complementary. He saw the Russia of the future bestriding the world like some great Colossus, with one foot planted on the coasts of the Mediterranean, the other on the shores of the Indian Ocean, grinding the Turks in Europe and crushing the British power in India under the heel of



LORD PALMERSTON

From the Painting by J. Partridge, in the National Portrait Gallery.

Syria as a reward for his unavailing services against the Greeks; and his reply to the sultan's refusal was an attempt to take by force what he could not obtain by diplomacy. His troops inflicted defeat after defeat on the Turkish armies. It seemed as if he might become master of Constantinople itself, when the sultan appealed to the tsar for help. Russian troops were sent to his assistance, but to prevent the establishment of Russian control over Turkey the western powers persuaded him to buy off Mehemet Ali by ceding Syria to him. Russia, however, still exacted as the price of her intended help a treaty (Unkiar Skelessi) by which, indeed, she promised protection to the sultan, but secured a pledge that in case of war the

PRO-TURKISH POLICY OF PALMERSTON

a conqueror who would be master alike of the Danube and the Indus.

Across the path of Russian ambition, as Palmerston conceived it, lay the empire of the Turk. It became with him an article of faith that the integrity of Turkey must be maintained. He was not blind to Turkish misrule. But the Sultan Mahmoud posed as a reformer and Palmerston was impressed by the zeal which he displayed for improvements in administration and in his military system. Zeal for amendment was taken for achieved reform, which was more a matter of appearance than of reality. Mahmoud found that he was battering fruitlessly against a wall of Turkish sloth, ignorance, and prejudice. His military reforms went little deeper than the uniforms and produced only an army of comic opera, while his attempts at toleration won for him the name of an infidel sultan and weakened his influence with the orthodox Mussulman, the only firm supporter of his power. Yet Mahmoud's unavailing energy in reform did for the moment obscure the essential vices of Turkish rule and help to make the bolstering-up of Turkey a defensible policy in England.

Palmerston constituted himself Turkey's friend. He upheld the sultan against his ambitious vassal Mehemet Ali, whose "unquiet eye" and avaricious tyranny had convinced Cobden, in 1836, of his insincerity and of the unsoundness of his power. "Puffed up by his creatures in Europe as a regenerator and reformer," and enjoying the support of the French, who believed in his strength and in return obtained special protection for their interests, Mehemet was venturing to expand his Syrian power.

England was no more disposed to see the Asiatic trade routes under the control of Mehemet than of Nicholas, and commercial interests reinforced Palmerston's political anxieties. In 1839 the sultan attempted to impose a check upon the growth of Mehemet's power; his armies were defeated as completely as before, and, as in 1833, it seemed as if Constantinople were at the mercy of the crafty ex-merchant of tobacco.

Again it was saved by external help; but this time Palmerston was determined that Russia should not act alone. To the chagrin of the French, he checkmated Russia by joining her.

In July, 1840, by the Convention of London, Palmerston got Russia, Prussia, and Austria to agree in offering terms to Mehemet, who, relying on French assistance, refused them. But where diplomacy failed,



"PITY THE POOR BLIND"

Earl Grey on his way to Paris. A hostile view of the joint action with France to establish Belgian independence.

From the Cartoon in "The Whig Dresser," March 16th, 1833.

coercion succeeded. With the aid of the Syrian population, Mehemet's troops were defeated, and he lost not merely Syria proper but all the rest of his gains. When an allied fleet appeared before Alexandria, Mehemet accepted the inevitable and resigned his conquests. But the good understanding of earlier days between England and Orleanist France was rudely interrupted. France thought that she had been flouted. And there is some reason in the contention that if Palmerston had handled her as tactfully as he had treated Russia much soreness might have been avoided.

Though Russia was more to blame for French exclusion from the London agreement than Palmerston, the latter had contrived to give the French the impression that

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he had been trying to bully them. "Palmerston," wrote King Leopold a little later, "likes to put his foot on their necks." But in 1841 France joined the other powers, in fact if not in strict form, in approving the Egyptian settlement, the sultan being brought to agree to a recognition of the vice-



QUEEN VICTORIA

From the Painting by Sir G. Hayter, in the National Portrait Gallery.

royalty of Egypt as hereditary in Mehemet's family—a concession to France's *protégé* which appeased her wounded feelings. And France was a party to the agreement between the great powers and Turkey known as the Straits Convention (July 13th, 1841), whereby the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus were closed to the warships of all powers when Turkey was at peace. This was a reversal of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, which in 1833 had given to Russia a specially privileged position amounting to a virtual protectorate of Turkey. Palmerston had defeated Russia by making her his accomplice.

During the closing stages of these negotiations the Whig ministry was tottering to its fall. Indeed, it had fallen once already in 1839, and the remainder of its term of office was in the nature of a curtain-piece. The Radical Grote had declared in 1838 that the country had both a Conservative government and a Conservative opposition. There was truth in the taunt, for during its later years the ministry continued in office only by sufferance of Peel, and through the unwillingness of the queen to part from her first ministers.

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837 she was an unfledged girl who had been brought up in strict seclusion.

Till within a short time of William's death she had been kept out of society, and with only a slender knowledge of even the narrow social groups from which our governors were then exclusively drawn, she turned with girlish ingenuousness to Lord Melbourne, who helped her with rare tact and sympathy through her early difficulties and made himself the guide of her inexperience. Melbourne poured out for her all the treasures of his well-stored mind; he exerted on her behalf, and perhaps for the first time, all the powers of his vigorous intellect. It was Melbourne who, with unaccustomed and laborious patience, answered the queen's questions on anything and everything, from religious doubt to the etiquette of military reviews, who told her how to receive a bishop, or suggested the most tactful way of fending off Uncle Leopold when he tried to get a direct expression of her opinion on a matter of policy which ministers must decide.

It was Melbourne, also, who initiated the queen, with a fairness which even his enemies were constrained to acknowledge, into those mysteries of the constitution which can be learnt only imperfectly from books. And this was well. For a German atmosphere had surrounded the queen from birth. Her father was at least half German, and her mother wholly German; her governess was German; her uncle Leopold, the counsellor of her girlhood, was German; and in 1840 she was to marry her German cousin, Albert of Saxe-Coburg. This might have been dangerous in matters of



FIRST STATE VISIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE CITY OF LONDON (1837)

From the Painting by Sir George Hayter, in the Kétyingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow.



QUEEN VICTORIA'S FIRST COUNCIL

From the Engraving by C. Fox, in the British Museum (1851-11-11-62), after the Painting by Sir David Wilkie

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domestic policy. In practice it influenced her mainly in questions of foreign policy, where there were compensating advantages in the understanding of continental affairs which sprang from a wide acquaintance with the complicated German cousinhood to which she



LORD MELBOURNE, QUEEN VICTORIA, AND THE PRINCE CONSORT: A FAREWELL INTERVIEW
From a Cartoon in "The Town," July 7th, 1841.

belonged, and which sometimes outweighed the disadvantages of her family prejudices. Melbourne's influence cast out much that was harmful in this German environment. To him it was chiefly due that whilst the queen followed her German models so far as to restore to the court a dignity which it had lacked under William IV, she was seldom misled by any high-flown theories of sovereign rights, derived from some reactionary continental court, to depart from the tried practices of a constitution in which precedent is more respected than theory and custom is as much revered as law.

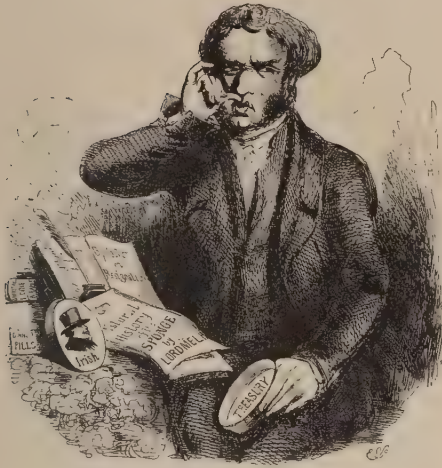
At the outset of her reign the queen was

popular. This was in part a tribute to her youth and sex. But it was due also to a sense of relief at the nation's escape from the Duke of Cumberland, who was universally hated, and whose subsequent rule in Hanover justified the national instinct. "Ernest is not a bad fellow," William IV had said of him, "but if anyone has a corn he will be sure to tread on it." "Your immediate successor with the moustaches," said Uncle Leopold, "is enough to frighten the people into the most violent attachment to you,"—for so long as the queen was unmarried and childless the Duke of Cumberland remained the heir-presumptive.

With certain lapses the queen's initial popularity was maintained, though it lost some of the fervour of the early days. It was maintained, primarily, because she made herself, as her uncle Leopold advised and as her own instinct told her to do, a national sovereign. "The great thing," said her uncle, "is to be the national sovereign of your own country and to love its very faults. This strengthens the mutual attachment, and that can never be too strong." Secondly, because, "by a providential gift of temperament," the queen was especially fitted to be the representative and interpreter of the British people in a period during which there was rising to power a middle class, many of whose ideas and virtues as well as limitations and defects she appreciated since her own character was based on them. In the third place, she took herself and her duties seriously and the age was serious; in her mingling of sentiment with respect for hard work and faith in common sense the queen was at one with the nation.

The queen had a strength of character which passed sometimes into obstinacy. She owed something to her grandfather, George III. She was self-confident and could show independence. King Leopold was manifestly hurt when some of his own teaching took an effect which excluded him from influence in directions in which he had expected to exercise it. He found his intrusions evaded and his importunities checked. "Dear uncle's" desire to "rule the roost" met with some sharp rebuffs. The queen, too, had lively prejudices; her likes and dislikes

QUEEN VICTORIA AND LORD MELBOURNE



THE LAST PINCH

Lord Melbourne's announcement of his resignation.

From the "Punch" Cartoon of August 14th, 1841, by permission of the proprietors.

were apt, in the early days, to run to extremes. But she was strong enough to conquer them when public interests required that they should be repressed. Even her strong leaning towards Whiggism, due partly to family considerations and partly to gratitude for Melbourne's kindness, was overcome when she had had time to learn the error of partisan leanings in a British sovereign. And though she was a jealous guardian of the prerogatives of the Crown, she realized that on political questions her ministers, and ultimately the House of Commons, must decide.

One of the queen's first mistakes of a serious kind was made when the Whigs resigned in 1839. She could not bear the

thought of losing Melbourne's counsel; she disliked the Tories, who were blamed for the narrow circumstances of her mother and herself during her girlhood; and at first she disliked the bourgeois in Peel, as later she came to detest the dominie in Gladstone. Peel, she says, is "such a cold, odd man" that she "can't make out what he means." No doubt his shy awkwardness was in ungenial contrast to the mellow urbanity of "dear Lord Melbourne." But it led the queen to make the blunder of refusing to change the ladies of her household on the proposed change of ministry.

The matter was badly handled on both sides. The queen was indignant when asked to dismiss her Whig companions, and Peel was unwilling to trust the queen in a domestic atmosphere of confidential Whiggism.



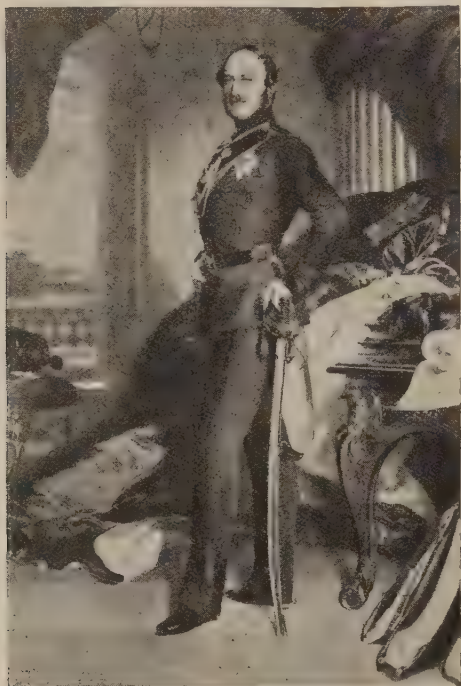
THE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Sir Robert Peel "called in" by the Queen to form a ministry.

From the "Punch" Cartoon of September 5th, 1841, by permission of the proprietors.

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Melbourne sympathized with Sir Robert and tried to mollify the queen's wrath. But George III's granddaughter was fully determined that there should be no Tory interference with her private life, and Peel refused to take office. Public opinion sup-



ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT

From the Painting by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, in the National Portrait Gallery.

ported the queen, and even the prudent Leopold approved of the queen's conduct.

No doubt a compromise would have been arranged if the queen had not been so eager for an excuse to keep Melbourne, and if Melbourne's chivalry had not fought a losing battle with his common sense, for he was loath to desert the queen. Peel refused to complete his ministry, and the Whigs then returned to office but not to power. When they resigned again in 1841 the prince consort, whom the queen had married in the previous year, managed to arrange the compromise which ought to have been devised in 1839. The Whig ladies resigned instead of waiting to be dismissed,

and the way was at last clear for the Conservative ministry for which Peel had been training his party since the Tamworth Manifesto of 1834.

Misunderstanding was not at once cleared away, for Lord Melbourne committed an error of judgment in continuing to write to the queen after he had left office. The correspondence was perhaps dictated more by feelings of fatherly benevolence than by political considerations—it was more to the woman than to the queen—but it was unfair to Peel. Yet this difficulty wore gradually away as Peel felt that he was winning the queen's confidence, and by 1844 the queen was asking King Leopold to agree with her opinion that she could not have "a better or a safer minister," and that "his resignation would be, for the whole country and the peace of Europe, a great calamity."

Peel took office with a strong and coherent majority to back him. The general election of 1841 had gone heavily against the Whigs, and it was apparent that, notwithstanding a popular foreign policy, their conduct of domestic affairs no longer gave confidence. That superabundance of "live lumber" which Place had scornfully commented upon in Whig administrations had been the cause of their undoing, and the nation now looked to Peel for help in difficulties of a kind with which Whigs had so far shown themselves ill fitted to deal.

The new ministry was a roll of great names. Peel himself had gathered power in opposition. The years of fallow after 1830 had been followed by years of growth. Even in 1837 Creevey notes, not without a touch of malice, that "the poor Spinning Jenny has acquired great power both of thinking and speaking." No one can study Peel's correspondence without feeling that in these years his mind and judgment had taken a great leap forward. Others of his ministry had ripened in opposition; not least Sir James Graham, a man of sound and moderate judgment, whose strength lay rather in his remarkable administrative capacity than in that gift for taking great decisions which is the supreme title to leadership. But he was a born chief-of-staff. Peel

STRENGTH OF PEEL'S MINISTRY

grew to depend upon him so fully that he became almost deputy prime minister.

The cabinet contained two men who had been prime ministers—Wellington, who gave counsel but held no office; and Ripon, who was of minor account. It included two other men who were to become prime ministers—Stanley, the secretary for war; and Aberdeen, the secretary for foreign affairs; while yet another future prime minister, W. E. Gladstone, was vice-president of the board of trade. The ministry included, in major or minor offices, three men who were to rule in India. Goulburn was an efficient chancellor of the exchequer, and Lord Lyndhurst returned to the woolsack.

Peel showed the full stretch of his abilities by the skill and authority with which he controlled and directed this powerful team. "We never had a minister who was so truly a first minister as he is," said Graham. "He makes himself felt in every department, and is really cognizant of the affairs of each. Lord Grey could not master such an amount of business; Canning could not do it. Now he is an actual minister, and is indeed *capax imperii*." This is the testimony of the zealous administrator; it reveals the strength of the government in the detail of business, which did not arise merely from departmental efficiency but owed something to the co-ordinating powers of a single

virile mind. And an equal tribute was paid to the ministry on wider grounds by a member of it who had himself presided over a cabinet when he wrote. "In many of the most important rules of public policy," Gladstone told the queen in 1880, "Sir Robert Peel's government surpassed generally the governments which have succeeded it, whether Liberal or Conservative. Among them I would mention purity in patronage, financial strictness, loyal adherence to the principles of public economy, jealous regard to the rights of parliament, a single eye to the public interest, strong aversion to extension of territorial responsibilities, and a frank admission of the rights of foreign countries as equal to those of their own."

The ministry commanded from the outset a larger measure of public confidence than the second Melbourne cabinet had ever enjoyed. *Punch* might sneer at Graham's "enthusiastic bigotry for everything as it is," or poke fun at Peel's "small, adventurous liberality, his half-bashful homage to the spirit of the age," yet the friends of progress placed more trust in the new ministry than they had ever given to the old. And the ministry needed all its internal force and all the public confidence that it could muster, so that it might have the strength which was needed to deal with the problems confronting it and crying aloud for speedy solution.



THE QUEEN RIDING OUT WITH LORD MELBOURNE

From the Painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A., in the Royal Collection



QUEBEC, FROM THE RIVER (1840)

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (648, c. 17, v) by A. Ducote, after the Sketch by Coke Smyth.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BRITISH PEOPLE BEYOND THE SEAS (1815-55).—I. CANADA

WHEN Britain recognized the independence of her thirteen colonies in North America, in 1783, the gloomiest prophecies as to her colonial future seemed justified. Bewildered by the difficult problem of the right relationship between colonies and the motherland, British statesmen had entirely failed to solve it. They were discouraged by their failure and were so far from imagining that their colonial power might be built up anew that they shrank from fresh responsibilities. The vast expansion of the next hundred and forty years was not merely unforeseen, it was not even desired. Yet from the moment at which Britain and the United States parted company new sets of activities came into play which led the British people, almost insensibly, to plant new nations, or to assume

new responsibilities, in almost every quarter of the globe. The varied tasks which they undertook during this period of reluctant but rapid expansion forced them to grapple, in the long run with remarkable success, with problems far more difficult and complex than those which had baffled them in their first colonial empire.

The story of this expansion is a record of amazing energy and vitality. To its achievement were consecrated great gifts, with daring and endurance, enterprise and patience, persistence and loyalty. Despite every blunder by the way, it called forth predominant qualities—a developing sense of obligation towards backward races and, where European peoples were concerned, that capacity for constructive statesmanship which had been most conspicuously lacking



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in the past. These qualities did not appear suddenly or at the outset, nor did they, in the first period, appear everywhere. They matured with experience. Many mistakes were made, and the path of development was seldom straight or easy. Wisdom was often learnt only through blundering; advance was sometimes stayed, and even followed by retreat; and the astonishing enterprise and confidence, without which expansion would, after all, have been impossible, was often shot with a curious diffidence and uneasiness, springing partly from the memory of earlier failures, partly from pessimistic theories of colonial development, and later still from a feeling that the British people were undertaking more than they could compass. In the history of British expansion, therefore, misgiving and distrust alternate with buoyant optimism and exhilarating activity. Yet even in moments of distrust, when statesmen doubted or were disposed to call a halt, the pioneers went quietly on, pushing forward the outposts of empire and with steady persistence making ready the way for some new advance.

Loyalists from the United States

Within ten years of the loss of the United States three new colonies had sprung from the ruins of the old colonial empire—Ontario, New Brunswick and, less directly, New South Wales. It is often forgotten that the American War of Independence was a civil war between loyalists and separatists as well as a struggle between the colonies and Britain. Even during the war some loyalists felt compelled to cross the border into Canada in search of refuge. When the war was over, many more found themselves in an impossible position in the independent colonies. In theory they were protected by the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, but in practice the congressional government was not strong enough to compel the states of the union to treat the loyalists with fairness. Thousands crossed the border into Canada. Some, at first about 12,000, entered Nova Scotia, where they soon formed the separate province of New Brunswick. Others, at first only 10,000 strong but afterwards in growing numbers, settled in districts which

now form part of Ontario. These settlers from the older colonies were granted in 1789 the honourable title of United Empire Loyalists. Ultimately they numbered, it is believed, as many as 60,000, and they played a great part in laying the foundations of a British Canada.

First Settlement in Australia

Nor was this all. The first settlement of Australia is closely linked with the loss of the American colonies. In the later years of the eighteenth century the public mind was full of the adventurous explorations of Captain Cook and his colleagues and of their great discoveries in the Southern Seas. Sentiment and necessity united to bring about the settlement of the re-discovered lands: sentiment because Cook had nominally annexed Australia to the British Crown; necessity because occupation was required to make the annexation legally effective, and because, at the same time, some new outlet had to be found for prisoners sentenced to transportation who could no longer be sent to America. This last consideration proved most urgent. Australia would no doubt have been colonized in any case. It even came near to sharing the fortune of Ontario and New Brunswick, for officials flirted half-heartedly with the idea of offering a home there to those American loyalists who had been brought to England with the retiring British soldiers and who were eating their hearts out whilst they waited in poverty and disappointment for the just compensation which never came. Perhaps it would have been better if Australia had first been peopled by such a nucleus of free settlers, but the plan was never carried out. Time proved, however, to be in one respect a matter of importance, and it is as well that necessity compelled the government to decide upon the establishment of a penal settlement at Botany Bay. On January 20th, 1788, just six days before a French expedition arrived to stake out a claim, Governor Phillip landed with a party of convicts and a small force of marines and established himself at Sydney.*

* On the official attitude see J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, pp. 432-43.

FIRST OCCUPATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

By 1815 the empire had been further extended in a way that had no connexion with our loss of the American colonies. The necessities of sea-power, coupled with anxiety about the route to India, rather than any desire for further territorial expansion, led to the first British occupation of South Africa. A station had been

surrendered to the Dutch, but when war broke out afresh it was re-taken, and in 1814 it was retained by the British, though compensation amounting in all to six millions sterling was paid to the Dutch for this and other conquests.

Before the close of the Napoleonic wars the British people had thus extended their



ENTRANCE TO TORONTO (1840)

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (648, c. 17, xxi) by A. Ducote, after the Sketch by Coke Smyth.

established by the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope, mainly to supply fresh food and water to the ships passing to and fro in the course of their eastern trade. The Dutch settlement was not large, though Capetown was a useful port of call. During the French revolutionary war, when Holland, or the Batavian Republic as it was then called, fell under French control, it was thought unwise to leave Capetown in the possession of a dependent ally of France; so, mainly for naval and strategic reasons, a British expedition was sent to seize it in 1795. At the time of the Treaty of Amiens the Cape was

colonial activities in three main directions since the apparent ruin of their colonial empire in 1783: they had planted two vigorous British colonies alongside the French settlements in Canada; they had begun, though not in the happiest conditions, the settlement of the most purely British of their modern colonies; and they had undertaken a perilous responsibility for the sparsely settled Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. During the same period the British power in India had been greatly extended and confirmed. Britain had, in fact, come to wield, in a new sense, something like

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a world-wide authority. But her statesmen were still far from having formulated any general principles of policy to guide them in dealing with the vast and varied responsibilities of this far-flung power. They had to reach them slowly, painfully, gropingly, at times almost by stumbling chance. But within forty years of Waterloo they had

the two provinces. The constitution granted to these provinces was not unlike those which Britain had been in the habit of conferring upon her colonies in the past. It provided each province with an elected legislative assembly, a legislative council or second chamber, and an executive council or committee of ministers. For those days



MONTREAL, 1840

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (648, c. 17, xix) by A. Ducote, after the Sketch by Coke Smyth.

come to recognize some of the fundamental principles of policy that have made possible a great association of free nations in the British Empire of the twentieth century.

It was in Canada that the first step was taken in developing the modern theory of colonial self-government, though it was not made easily or without much preliminary fumbling. Lower Canada (Quebec) was at first almost wholly French; Upper Canada (Ontario) was English. In 1791 Pitt had convinced himself that it was impossible to persuade the two races to work together in harmony within the bounds of a single state. He had evaded the difficulty by separating

the franchise upon which the assembly was elected cannot be called illiberal, but the second chamber was nominated by the Crown, and the executive council was more like a committee of officials than an English cabinet. There was neither law nor tradition to compel it to conform to the wishes of the majority in the assembly. In practice it took its cue, through the governor, from the colonial office. Laws could be made solely by the help of the elected assembly; but they could only be carried out by officers who took their orders from London. Colonial secretaries generally meant well, but it was a paradoxical system which gave to the

LIMITS OF CANADIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT

colonists the appearance of self-government whilst nullifying part of its effect by making the executive responsible to an external authority. As we should put it now, the colonists had self-government but not responsible government. And in this respect Quebec and Ontario, French and English, had a common grievance.

limited political power that had been conferred upon them. They had to learn the habits of self-government. It would be rash to contend, therefore, that in 1791 the constitution did not confer the measure of self-government for which the colonies were then ripe. The franchise was certainly more equal and probably more widespread than it then



AMERICA FORT, NIAGARA RIVER

Scene of the seizure by British officers of a ship, belonging to a company of freebooters, which had sought refuge on the American side of the Niagara River. The technical violation of U.S. territory was acknowledged by Lord Aberdeen, and apologies were made.

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (648, c. 17, xx, pubd. c. 1840) by A. Ducote, after the Sketch by Coke Smyth.

It was not until long after 1791 that these defects led to serious difficulty. For a time the constitution did not work ill. The small bands of pioneers in Ontario, engrossed in the grim struggle with nature, had probably little time for politics; indeed, for reasons presently to be mentioned, their settlements were scattered in a degree which hampered the growth of a common political sense. In Quebec the French, long accustomed to an autocratic system, did not at once realize the value of even the

was in England, and much more general and equal than it was in Scotland. In England hot debate had been raging quite recently as to the degree of authority which George III was entitled to exercise over his cabinets, and it was not yet plain to contemporaries that the verdict had gone in favour of parliamentary control. There was nothing in the constitutions to offend violently the political sense of the time. And since it was not until 1818 that the colonies were self-supporting, there seemed nothing outrageous

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in the idea that the Colonial Office should share in the control of an administrative system which was supported in part from the British treasury.

More than a vague sense of political impotence was required to make the constitutional problem urgent. There was also

with the consequence that settlers were driven farther and farther afield whilst good land more conveniently situated remained unworked. Excessive dispersion of the scanty population exaggerated the natural difficulties of a new country, where communication is always hard, particularly in



MACKENZIE'S RISING: ENGAGEMENT IN THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (648, c. 17, xv, pubd. c. 1840) by A. Ducote, after the Sketch by Coke Smyth.

another grievance which, like the constitutional grievance, was shared by French and English alike. The communications of the colony were bad. This was due in part to an unsatisfactory land system which encouraged dispersion and enabled speculators to take up land which they did not clear but held for a rise in price; in part to a well-intentioned plan whereby a proportion of the land was reserved for the support of the Protestant clergy as a set-off to the tithes which the French still paid to their priests. The clergy reserves, like the government reserves and the holdings of the speculators, were seldom fully cleared or cultivated,

the early stages of settlement. As it was precisely this kind of question which was not likely to be understood in London, the colonists came, not unnaturally, to think that they were best fitted to decide their own land questions for themselves.

It was long before Canadian questions could extort really serious consideration in England. When they forced themselves at last upon the pained attention of the cabinet they assumed a threefold form: first, a constitutional conflict between the governor and his executive in Ontario; secondly, a parallel though not quite identical contest in Quebec which was embittered by racial



PAPINEAU'S REBELLION

(1) Passage of the Richlieu by night, November 22nd, 1837.

(2) A fortified pass: Colonel Wetherall advancing to the capture of St. Charles, November 25th, 1837.

From Lithographs in colours, in the British Museum (pubd. 1840), by N. Hartnell, after Sketches by Lord Charles Beauchamp.

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antagonism; in the third place, a series of bitter quarrels between French and British, between Ontario and Quebec. It is most convenient to take the disputes in this order, though in doing so chronology must to some extent be ignored.

"Family Compact" in Ontario

It was in Ontario that the constitutional question was placed in the clearest light. The province had, at first, been the undisputed preserve of the United Empire Loyalists. Later fresh streams of immigrants poured into the province: some from the United States, others from Britain, where the growth of population and the distress due to industrial change gave an impetus to emigration. The new colonists found an oligarchy of the older generation, mainly, but not exclusively, United Empire Loyalists, who monopolized patronage and positions of authority. An agitation arose against this so-called "family compact," this ring of politicians which controlled the legislative and executive councils and alone had secured the confidence of successive governors. At first the agitators, never quite sure of a majority in the assembly, made little headway. Except on land policy and on the clergy reserves, which excited the wrath of denominations excluded from this endowment, there was no widespread feeling on any great question of public policy. Resentment was directed chiefly against the exclusive character of the administration, against the hostility shown to new colonists by supporters of the "family compact," and against the spirit of persecution displayed by the ruling oligarchy in some of the measures by which it sought to maintain its position.

About 1824 the discontented found a leader of considerable insight, though of less judgment, in a Scots journalist, William Lyon Mackenzie, who attacked the ruling oligarchy through his newspaper, the *Colonial Advocate*. This agitation would have been more healthy than dangerous if the governors could have seen how much wisdom there was in the constructive side of Mackenzie's policy. He urged that the executive council, or ministry, should be chosen from the majority in the

assembly, and that in this way the elected house should be given control of the administration. Mackenzie had hit upon the plan which ultimately proved to be the solution of many difficulties in colonial policy. If the governors had been equally far-seeing, had chosen the executive from the leaders of the majority in the assembly, as they were legally free to do if they wished, and had agreed to abide loyally by their advice, all serious danger would have been averted. It is not even certain that Mackenzie's Radical party would have gained any established ascendancy. Some governors saw the defects of the ruling oligarchy, but they could never make up their minds to stand clearly apart from it. In the election of 1836 the influence of the governor was exercised on behalf of the "family compact"; the opposition was denounced as disloyal; and Mackenzie's followers were defeated at the polls.

Smarting from the stings of misrepresentation, and utterly discouraged by the rout of his party, Mackenzie's sound political sense deserted him, and unhappily he made true the hitherto false aspersions upon his loyalty by raising a rebellion. A feeble attack upon Toronto was easily repulsed in 1837. The small band of rebels was scattered, two of them were executed, and Mackenzie himself was forced to take refuge in the United States. In happier times he was able to return to Canada, to sit in the Canadian parliament, and to see the working out of the principle which he had seemed to advocate in vain.

Revolt in Quebec

In the year of Mackenzie's rising a revolt also broke out in Quebec, where the constitutional grievance had become entangled with racial antagonism. The French had moved far since the days when, grateful for the preservation of their institutions, for the careful respect shown to the rights of the Catholic Church, and for the consideration with which they had been treated, they had felt towards British rulers as the citizens of Montreal had felt in 1760, when they had told Amherst that he had behaved to them "as a father rather than as a conqueror." For a time the French *habitants* had remained indifferent to representa-

RACIAL FEELING IN CANADA

tive institutions. Then the ties of the feudal system which bound them to their *seigneurs* had begun to weaken, and they fell under the influence of demagogues, of outlook little wider than their own but of slightly better education, who encouraged them to expect too much rather than too little from the political privileges which they had formerly despised. They found that their representatives in the assembly encountered the same difficulty as that which Mackenzie was to struggle against in vain in Ontario; they might be in the majority, but they could not control administration or carry their measures against the legislative council nominated by the governor. But whereas Mackenzie's foes were of his own race, the French Canadians found themselves opposed by Englishmen.

Racial feeling was, moreover, inflamed in other ways. In the early days of the British occupation the French had Quebec almost to themselves. With the growth of trade which followed the development of Ontario there came into Quebec a number of British merchants and traders, active, bustling and vigorous, who were eyed resentfully by a community whose interests were agricultural and whose ways were conservative. Parts of Quebec were, after a time, settled also by British colonists. The British minority, small though it yet was, seems to have frightened the French. National feeling grew self-conscious. Possibly the British were sometimes aggressive and inconsiderate. To the French, on the other hand, they were foreigners and intruders. Certainly the growing numbers of the British inhabitants, combined with the British monopoly of real political power, served to exacerbate French feeling. From about 1806 a national movement had come

into existence inspired by aspirations towards a *nation canadienne*.

Finance has always been the weapon of an elected assembly against an executive seeking to thwart its will. From 1815 onwards the assembly of Quebec used this weapon with effect, and by 1831 it had



LORD DURHAM

From the Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., in the possession of the Earl of Durham.

obtained control of all provincial finance except the hereditary revenues of the Crown. It had proved its power of obstruction by withholding the salaries of judges and officials (much as the American colonies had done in the eighteenth century), and it had come near to creating a deadlock in the government of the province. Some French Canadians would have been content to tighten the pressure until all the revenues of the province were within the control of the assembly, in the hope that political authority would ultimately be yielded to

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those who held the financial mastery. But a more aggressive nationalist party had already arisen under the leadership of Louis Papineau, member for Montreal and speaker of the assembly.

Papineau was an eloquent enthusiast but devoid of judgment and without much genuine political vision. He tended to emphasize the nationalist rather than the constitutional conflict, though he did not relax the demand for constitutional reforms. But he was no moulder of a new nation. "A braggart in the forum and a coward in the field," says a Canadian historian, with some severity, "he provoked a storm which he knew neither how to allay nor direct." In 1834 he formulated an elaborate programme of reform: complete financial power for the assembly, an elected upper chamber, and remedies for a long trail of abuses. Further, he demanded that the executive council should, in part at least, be nominated by the assembly, though apparently he did not see, as Mackenzie did, how this was to be achieved. The extent to which racial prejudice had come to dominate his mind is seen in his insistence upon the abolition of a chartered company which was bringing British immigrants into Canada. This marked a development of the idea of "Canada for the French Canadians," which dims the respect that cannot be denied to Papineau as a constitutional reformer.

Louis Papineau's Rebellion

Papineau's demands secured some attention at home for Canadian affairs. Lord Gosford was sent to the colony as governor-in-chief, with a commission to inquire into grievances. But he was no more successful than his predecessors in conciliating French opinion. The constitutionalists, in their disappointment, took the course of restricting supplies, hoping that this time-honoured resort to the power of the purse would enable them to extort concessions. Their policy was not immediately effective, and their failure flung the game into the hands of the national extremists. Late in 1837 Papineau and his friends rose in rebellion. The rising lasted less than a month and was easily put down, but not before some of the rebels had shown

great heroism or before acts of brutality had been committed in the campaign against them which still rankle in Canadian memories. Fortunately this rising was followed by no executions. Papineau himself escaped to the United States, but he was eventually pardoned and allowed to return to Canada, where he once more was able to enter parliament.

Economic Warfare

In both the Canadas, then, discontent had been driven to the extremity at which it caused revolt. In both the Canadas rebellion had been crushed with ease. But it is one thing to stamp down revolt and quite another thing to remove its causes and to heal the wounds which it leaves in the body politic. At home a Whig ministry was in power. What would it do? Its difficulties were increased by the quarrels of Ontario and Quebec. These disputes were rooted, no doubt, in racial hostility, but they took an economic form. Pitt's division of the provinces in 1791 had afforded an escape from one difficulty, but, unaccompanied as it was by any plan of federation for common purposes, it had been the parent of others. Chief of these was the command which it gave to French Canada over the external communications of the British Canadians. Across their route to the sea lay the French settlements, and Quebec had at first not merely the control of customs but also a monopoly of the revenue derived from them. This injustice was partially surmounted by assigning to Ontario a small proportion of the revenue. But Quebec took advantage of its position to manipulate the tariff to the disadvantage of Ontario. The home parliament tried to regulate matters by the Canada Trade Act of 1822, and Ontario's proportion of the customs revenue was ultimately raised to two-fifths. But this economic warfare was a fruitful cause of hostility between the two races. By the time that the demand for control of the executive had become full-grown in French Canada it had created also a serious dilemma, for how was full control of the executive in Quebec to be reconciled with adequate protection of the economic interests of the settlers in Ontario?

DURHAM'S IMPERIAL VISION

The Whig government which was in power when news reached England of the two rebellions took the drastic step of suspending the Canadian constitutions, but it sent out Lord Durham to investigate Canadian grievances and to carry on the government in the meantime. In this plan great risks were united with great advantages. Durham was a dangerous man to send on such a mission. Always of uncertain temper, he was now in a precarious state of health. Almost anything might have happened, for he possessed in almost equal degree the gift of winning fast friends and a capacity for making sworn foes. But he had, beyond the measure of most of his contemporaries, the imperial vision, the will to trust the people, whether at home or in the colonies, to learn the art of governing wisely by governing themselves, and the rare ability to disentangle guiding principles of policy from the details of immediate difficulty.

It happened that the vast powers entrusted to Durham—powers, it was said, exceeding those of the king himself—were well used. The colonists were inclined to joke at first at the state and retinue of the English aristocrat. They soon came to value his sympathy and tact. If Durham failed it was certainly not with the Canadians who were for a brief period his subjects. Canada was pacified.

Home Attacks on Durham's Policy

A measure of clemency, whereby Durham exiled eight rebels temporarily to the Bermudas in order to avoid the odious necessity of more stringent punishment and the provocation of a series of State trials, was held to be in excess of his powers. The act was not questioned in Canada, least of all by the exiles themselves, but it gave an opening to Durham's enemies at home, who attacked his proceedings with such violence that the Melbourne government quailed before the onslaught and revoked the ordinance. Durham heard first of his betrayal, as he called it, through an American newspaper. He flung up his post and returned home in November, 1838.

Many thought that Durham had failed. He spoke of himself, with an approach to exaggeration, as "a degraded, disavowed

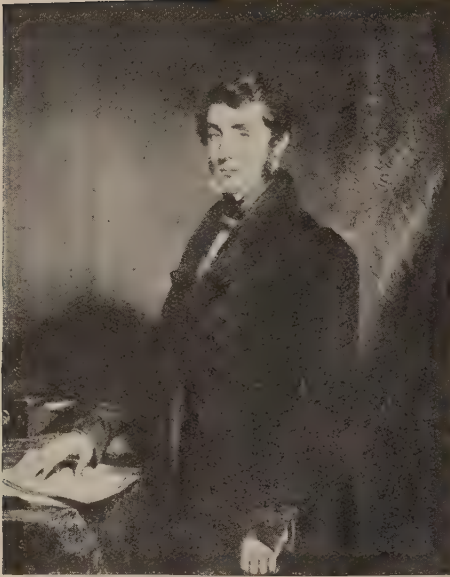
governor." But though he had been little over five months in Canada (May 28th to November 1st, 1838) he brought home with him materials for his famous report, presented early in 1839, which was at once the inspiration of a Canadian settlement and a document of permanent constitutional value. His main recommendations were the reunion of the provinces and the grant of responsible government. The responsibility of all officers, except the governor and his secretary, to the Canadian parliament, he urged, should be "secured by every means known to the British Constitution." "The governor . . . must carry on his government by heads of departments, in whom the United Legislature shall repose confidence; . . . he must look for no support from home in any contest with the Legislature except in points involving strictly Imperial interests."

Value of Durham's Proposals

Durham himself interpreted imperial interests more widely than we should do to-day. He would, for example, have regarded the disposal of colonial land as one of them, for he was influenced by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a member of his staff, who advocated systematic control of emigration and a general uniform policy in the disposal of British colonial land, while the Canadians thought that they could manage it far better themselves. In 1839 Britain had not yet abandoned its belief in protection, so that tariff questions and the control of trade might still be reckoned imperial as well as colonial interests. But these reservations do not impair the value of the broad constitutional principle which Durham so clearly enunciated.

If Durham was not so successful in solving the racial question it was because he had to recommend the possible though he might envisage the ideal. "I expected," wrote Durham, "to find a contest between a government and a people. I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state. I found a struggle not of principles but of races." Durham dreamed of a federal system for all the Canadian provinces. But for such a solution Canada was not yet ripe. The immediate problem was that of teaching

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CHARLES EDWARD POULETT THOMSON,
LORD SYDENHAM

From the Mezzotint by S. Reynolds, Jun., in the British Museum, after the Painting by the Engraver.

the French and the English to work in harmony. Durham believed that this could best be achieved by flinging both the warring elements into a single constitutional system, to learn together the salutary lesson of co-operation. There is force in the contention that a federal solution would have been premature until, in some measure at least, that lesson had been learnt.*

The report converted much of the best contemporary opinion to Durham's beliefs. Macaulay thought it "exceedingly good and able." Brougham's exasperation is almost the measure of its success: "The matter came from a swindler; the style from a coxcomb," he said, in spiteful allusion to Durham's staff, "and the Dictator furnished only six letters, D-U-R-H-A-M."† These innuendoes were not true. But Brougham had led the attacks which had brought Durham home, and that the victim should disappoint his tormentor by snatching success from the jaws of failure was more than Brougham's

mean nature could endure. Modern opinion is at one with that of John Stuart Mill when he said, "Durham has been thwarted but he has not failed."

A Canadian historian has declared that "a part, and not the best part," of Durham's plan was carried out. And it is true that his constitutional suggestions were not all carried into immediate effect. The Act of Union (Royal Assent, July 23rd, 1840) established a single parliament for the two Canadas, and it provided, as a safeguard for the French, that each province should have an equal number of representatives in the assembly. This looked like equal dealing, as the French could still rely upon an overwhelming majority in Quebec and might expect some support from the opposition of the day in Ontario. But this position was not a stable one. Since 1815 British immigrants had been pouring into Canada at the rate of twenty thousand and even fifty thousand a year. Most, but not all, of them went to Ontario. With the growth of Canadian prosperity there was certain to be an increasing element of British traders in the towns, as well as an increase of British settlers on the land in some portions of the province. The fears of the French Canadians were perhaps exaggerated, but there was some ground for the feeling that they might be swamped by British new-comers.

If ministers followed Durham on the question of re-union, they acted less decidedly in regard to ministerial responsibility. It is often assumed that the practice of regarding the governor as being, within his sphere, like a constitutional king, acting only on the advice of ministers whom he had chosen because they possessed the confidence of the assembly, took effect simultaneously with the creation of a united parliament. But this is a mistake. Durham's successor, Poulett Thomson (Lord Sydenham), did much to restore order and efficiency, but he did so by entering the political arena in the ancient fashion, though with greater wisdom and success. He held that the governor must be the minister: he could not be responsible to men in the colonies if he was to be responsible to the imperial government. The dilemma was a false one, for the two respon-

* The standard Life of Durham is by Dr. Stuart Reid, who had access to family papers.

† Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (ed. 1908), pp. 373-4.

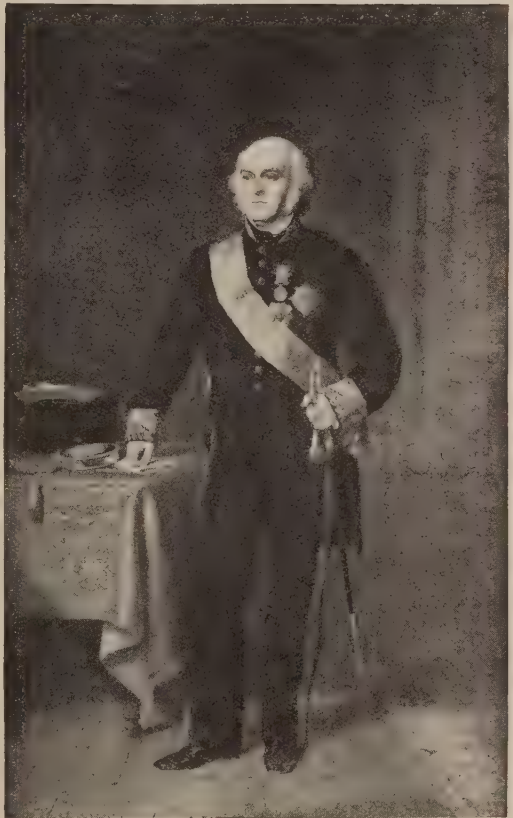
ELGIN'S GOVERNORSHIP OF CANADA

sibilities can, in the main, be made distinct. Political responsibilities could be entrusted to colonial ministers while the powers of the Crown were exercised by the governor. Certain practical difficulties arose from the fact that those powers were wielded by the governor as the deputy of his sovereign, who was in turn advised by the ministry at home, but there was nothing in law or principle to prevent the actual working out of the British constitutional custom in a way that would be acceptable and convenient to all concerned.

This was the view adopted by Lord Elgin, who became governor in 1847, shortly after his marriage with Durham's daughter, Lady Mary Lambton, who had been in Canada with her father and shared her father's opinions. Elgin was as unwilling as Durham had been to accept the doctrine of some English Radicals, who thought, with Peel and Disraeli at this date, that colonial independence was sooner or later inevitable, and who were prepared, in Elgin's words, "to let the colonists . . . go to the devil their own way." He held it to be difficult but not impossible for the governor to avoid falling into either "mock sovereignty or the dirt and confusion of local factions," and he set himself to reconcile the imperial connexion and the dignity of his office with the full practice of responsible government.

When a general election gave a majority to a coalition of French Canadians and British Liberals, Elgin accepted a ministry from the dominant party. The new ministry carried a bill in 1849 for indemnifying inhabitants of Quebec who had suffered losses during the rebellion. A similar bill had already been passed to cover losses in Ontario. But the new bill was denounced as a measure for rewarding rebels, and Elgin was urged to reserve it for consideration by the home government. This had not been done in the case of the bill relating to Ontario, and Elgin refused to discriminate. Acting on the advice of his ministers in the English constitutional fashion

he gave his assent to the bill. There was an instantaneous outbreak of fury against him. On his return from the Parliament House he was pelted with rotten eggs. The mob of Montreal got completely out of hand and the angry rioters manifested their displeasure against the governor by burning their own Parliament House. A few days later Elgin was attacked with stones; he narrowly escaped serious injury and every panel of his coach was smashed. Elgin was unmoved. He had doubted the wisdom of the disputed bill, but he had never doubted the wisdom of assenting to it. His firmness settled the constitutional principle, and the time came when his critics returned to power and found him as loyal to them as he had been to the



JAMES BRUCE, EIGHTH EARL OF ELGIN

From the Painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A., in the Town Council Chambers, Dunfermline.

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ministry which they had opposed. Yet it was in the face of fierce hostility from many British Canadians that Elgin established in Canada the practice to which home and colonial constitutions alike owe much of their strength.

Elgin's policy was important not only for Canada but throughout the colonies. In course of time it furnished the ruling precedent. It is for this reason that so much space has been devoted to the Canadian problem and its solution. But in Canada it had a second effect of almost equal importance. By happy chance Elgin's opponents were British, not French. He had warned the British extremists that in attacking him they were making him popular with the French Canadians. And there can be no doubt that, since his stand had, by accident, been taken on a measure which deeply concerned the province of Quebec, it helped to convince the French of his fairness and impartiality and to soothe their nationalist susceptibilities. Racial problems may never be wholly eliminated from Canadian politics, but Elgin had succeeded beyond expectation in his great task of appeasement.

Before he left Canada three other questions had been faced. Disputes about the clergy

reserves had been brought to an end by transferring the lands to the municipalities for secular uses, subject to certain provisions for vested interests: Elgin apparently disliked this, but he accepted it. The *habitant* had become impatient with the feudal land system, a heritage of the French dominion in Quebec; the privileges of the feudal lords were brought to an end in 1854 by the abolition of seigneurial tenures, again tempered by provisions for vested interests. Elgin brought great economic relief to Canada, much depressed since 1846 through the loss of its preference in the British corn market and through the delay in repealing the Navigation Laws until 1849, for he succeeded in negotiating a reciprocity treaty in 1854 with the United States. Elgin could point also to an immense railway development and to the foundation of the University of Toronto as among the achievements of his governorship. He found Canadians discontented, torn by faction and economically depressed; he left them in 1854 moving hopefully along paths of progress that he had done much to trace.*

* See Professor G. M. Wrog's very clear and helpful *Life of Lord Elgin*.



QUEBEC, FROM THE CHÂTEAU, 1840

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (648, c. 17, vi) by A. Ducote, after the Sketch by Coke Smyth.



BOTANY BAY HEADS, FROM NEWTOWN, 1848

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (Maps 17, c. 41) by W. Spreat, Exeter, after the Drawing by Capt. R. M. Westmacott.

CHAPTER IX

THE BRITISH PEOPLE BEYOND THE SEAS (1815-55)

II. AUSTRALASIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

BETWEEN 1815 and the middle of the nineteenth century the course of colonial development in Australia was not less remarkable than in Canada. It led ultimately to the same goal of responsible self-government, but the obstacles were different. When the first transports were sent to Sydney Cove, British statesmen intended to do an old thing; in fact they did an entirely new thing. What they sought was a substitute for the old system of sending convicts to America, where they passed into a kind of servitude as the indentured labourers of free colonists. In America there were masters enough to receive the convicts, and the preponderance of free colonists was so great that the inflow of these

indentured servants had no greatly adverse effects on the general character of the colonial populations. But in Australia there were at first no free settlers. Botany Bay began as a kind of overseas prison; it differed from a jail principally in affording more room for the convicts and their military guard and in the kind of work upon which the convicts were employed. The government, therefore, was for some time more closely analogous to the discipline of a convict ship than to that of a colony. The early governors were all naval officers. But in 1815 the settlement was ruled by a military governor, Colonel Lachlan Macquarie, the very remarkable, if somewhat autocratic, administrator who had reached

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GOVERNOR LACHLAN MACQUARIE

New South Wales towards the end of 1809, when the colony was at the nadir of its fortunes.

When Macquarie arrived the little state was in turmoil. His predecessor, Governor Bligh, victim in an earlier day of the famous mutiny of the *Bounty*, had been deposed by his own subordinates. Still aboard his ship the *Porpoise*, he did not finally set sail to lay his case before an indulgent government in England until May, 1810. Macquarie found a population of just over ten thousand souls in his charge. Of these about half had come out as convicts, the men much outnumbering the women. The rest were divided about equally between children (some of them Australian-born and the offspring of convicts) and free adults. The population of free adults consisted of the members of the small official staff, the garrison, the wives of soldiers and officials, and a small band of voluntary settlers, who numbered probably seven hundred at the most. The inhabitants were grouped round four centres: more than half of the people lived at Sydney; at Parramatta and on the Hawkesbury were more diffused settlements; and a small gang of convicts under a military guard worked the coal mines at Newcastle. In 1803 a sort of

branch settlement had been established in Tasmania to receive the overflow of convicts from New South Wales, since it was felt that it might be dangerous to send too many to a single colony. These then were Macquarie's subjects.

A sound and successful state has seldom been fashioned from more unlikely material, yet it need not be assumed that every convict was a cut-throat or a villain. The harsh criminal code of those days consigned hundreds of men and women to Botany Bay for trifling offences. The Scots reformers of 1794 had, by miscarriage of justice, been sent there for no offence at all; the men transported for complicity in the naval mutinies or in the Irish rebellion might have been misguided, but they were not necessarily vicious, any more than the unfortunate trade unionists of Tolpuddle, or the men who were trapped into the Derbyshire rising by Oliver the Spy. It is a remarkable but attested fact that from the beginning the children of the convicts threw off the convict taint and became



SIR THOMAS MAKDOUGALL BRISBANE

From the Lithograph in the British Museum (10817, k. 18, i)
by F. Schenck.



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a healthy element in colonial life.* Moreover, when the conditions are considered, it must be admitted that the colony was much less prone to violence than might have been expected. It was disorderly and turbulent rather than violent. Even Bligh's deposition, which had divided the colony into factions, was a bloodless revolution. This is the more

state of health and prosperity which made his autocracy seem an anachronism. Most of his mistakes sprang from his blundering attempts to carry through an enlightened policy, for he aimed steadily at the restoration of the convicts to the ranks of honest and respectable society. This was a worthy aim, but he was sometimes betrayed by his



PARRAMATTA RIVER, FROM FORT PHILLIP, 1853

From the Engraving in the British Museum (Maps 1, c. 20, xix), after the Drawing by F. C. Terry.

remarkable when it is remembered that the population was not a sober one; the average annual consumption of spirits by adults was probably more than six gallons a head, and the favourite currency was rum.

Macquarie made many mistakes: sometimes he exceeded his legal authority; he quarrelled with his law officers: but by the end of his reign—for it really deserved that title—he had nursed the colony into a

eagerness to achieve it into excessive indulgence towards undeserving individuals, and it was even urged at last that in his zeal to restore the sinner he was robbing transportation of its terrors. The “emancipists,” or freed convicts, became his special care, and he seems at times to have fallen into the error of mistaking his hopes of them for more authentic signs of reformation, to the scandal of free settlers and of those who put the law before philanthropy.†

* Opinions do, however, differ on this point, and some authorities hold that the convict race died out. But though the importance of the convict element may have been exaggerated, it is difficult to reconcile the view that the convicts had no descendants with the statistics of 1800–20.

† Macquarie's dispatches, preserved in the Record Office, are very interesting, though space has not been found to quote them here. They have been freely used by Dr. Marion Phillips, in the *Life of Macquarie* called *A Colonial Autocrat* (London, 1909).



SYDNEY HARBOUR, FROM WATSON'S BAY, 1853

From the Engraving in the British Museum (Maps 1, c. 20, v), after the Drawing by F. C. Terry.



THE CUSTOM HOUSE, CIRCULAR QUAY, SYDNEY, 1853

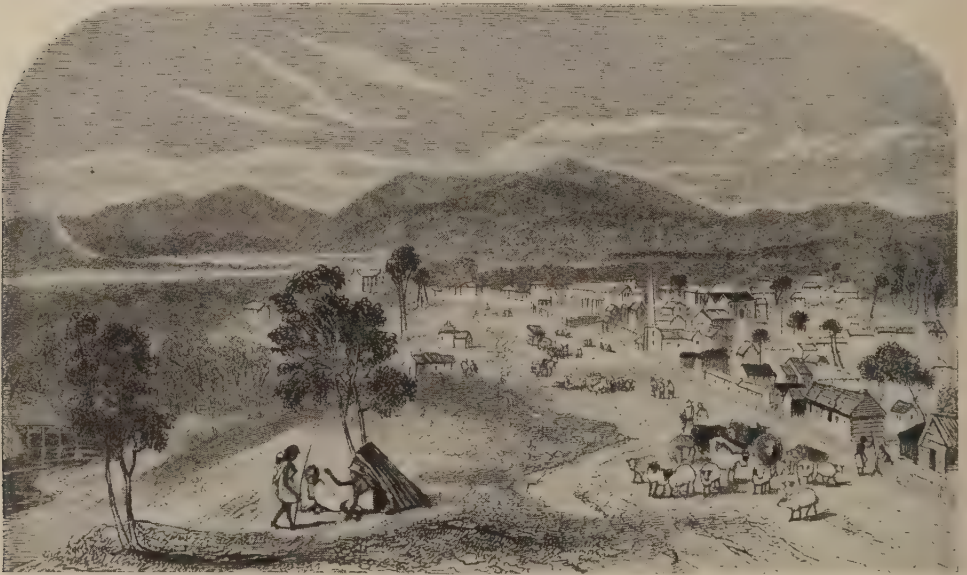
From the Engraving in the British Museum (Maps 1, c. 20, XXXV), after the Drawing by F. C. Terry.

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When Macquarie handed over his governorship to Sir Thomas Brisbane in 1821 the colony was certainly much stronger than he had found it. Many of the ills of an infant colony had been surmounted, and free settlers were arriving in greater numbers; in the first ten years after the Napoleonic wars the average immigration of free settlers was about three hundred a year; in the next

very unusual in British colonial enterprises. During Macquarie's time it had cost the Treasury close on a quarter of a million a year, whilst up to 1820 it had cost altogether about ten million pounds. But it was felt that the colony now required a form of government more advanced than that of the quarter-deck or the parade-ground.

In 1823 a legislative council was created.



CITY OF ADELAIDE, 1852

From an Engraving in "The Three Colonies of Australia," by Samuel Sidney, in the British Museum (741, d. 4).

five years the average rose to about one thousand. The colonists were pushing farther afield. In 1813 the possibilities of the country for wool-growing, already apparent to some enterprising colonists, were emphasized by the discovery of the Bathurst Plains, to the west of the Blue Mountains. The government had previously shown the economic possibilities of the colony in two other directions by working the coal mines of Newcastle and by carrying on a woollen factory with the labour of female convicts. New South Wales was not yet able to do without financial support from home; indeed, the fact that it was a convict settlement compelled the home government to spend money upon it with a generosity

It was appointed by the Crown, and the governor could override it, but it included non-official colonists, and was the tiny germ from which representative institutions grew. The powers of the council rapidly increased as the colony became self-supporting (1827) and it gained control over finance. After 1828 the governor could no longer act over its head in legislative matters, but it still remained largely an advisory body, and there were no elected members. Meanwhile, the colony was growing in strength and numbers. Explorations were making known the river system and the settled area was being extended inland. New South Wales gradually came to look less and less like a penal settlement as the years went by, though

LAND PROBLEM IN AUSTRALIA

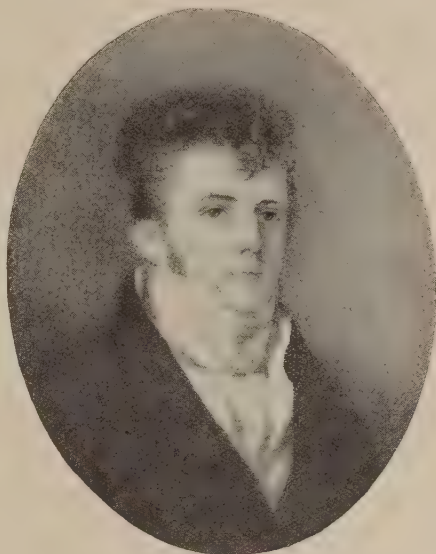
it would be wrong to underestimate the value of the convicts as builders and road-makers and in providing a supply of other labour during the infancy of the colony.

Before New South Wales came of age as a self-governing colony other settlements had been formed in Australia. Tasmania, already founded, was not for some time a happy enterprise. It received in 1823 a frame of government similar to that set up in New South Wales, though it was less well prepared for it. The colony had to pass through two severe trials—a war with the aborigines and a more serious struggle with bands of escaped colonists—before peace and prosperity came to it. Even as a penal settlement it contrasted unfavourably with Sydney, for the convicts were more violent and the treatment of them was far more harsh.

Victoria was more fortunate. It was first settled, almost simultaneously, by three independent enterprises from Tasmania—by some whalers (1834); by a pastoral group which established itself at Geelong; and by a trader who settled near Melbourne (1835). The authorities did not look altogether kindly on these private ventures. But the original settlers were followed by others from New South Wales, and a rudimentary form of government had to be provided, at first subordinate to that of the older colony. This was only a temporary expedient, which had to be abandoned as the new colony grew in wealth, population and importance. Queensland owed its colonization to two independent sources: a penal settlement at Brisbane, established in 1826 to relieve Sydney and Tasmania; and the sheep-farmers who moved northwards from New South Wales, inside the coastal range, until the lengthening line of their communications with Sydney made it essential that they should find a readier outlet to the sea. The two streams converged in 1840 when Brisbane, at first closed to all but convicts, was thrown open to free settlers.

Meanwhile, the two remaining colonies had been settled direct from England. A party had been sent out in 1829 to settle on the Swan River, and this enterprise became the nucleus of Western Australia; but through mismanagement the new colony almost died

at birth, and it made only a slow recovery from the maladies of its infancy. One of the blunders made by the government was the lavish and indiscriminating way in which land was granted to the promoters of the settlement. As it turned out, some got good land but had insufficient labourers to work it, while others got land which would not repay cultivation, and the vast-



EDWARD GIBBON WAKEFIELD

From the Miniature by an artist unknown, in the National Portrait Gallery.

ness of the individual grants led to a fatal dispersion of the colonists.

This land problem was not wholly new. It appeared in some form or other in all our colonies. It had attracted the attention of a group of colonial reformers at home who were inspired by the doctrines of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the apostle of scientific colonization. Wakefield was an ardent believer in colonial expansion at a time when public men were still largely indifferent to its possibilities. On the one hand he was an advocate of colonial self-government, but on the other hand he believed in imperial control of colonial land, for he looked upon our colonies as the heritage of our surplus home population. He denounced large and reckless grants and believed that land should

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be sold for a "sufficient" price, the money being used to aid emigration. In this way it was hoped that two prime needs of an infant colony, capitalists to develop the land and labourers to help them in working it, would both be satisfied. Wakefield's doctrines were as much honoured in the breach as in the observance, but they were the inspiration of the movement which led to the colonization of South Australia, of which the first settle-



REV. SAMUEL MARSDEN

ment was successfully planted at Adelaide in 1836. By 1840 the main lines of Australian colonization had therefore been marked out, and a fairly steady flow of emigrants was passing from England to these embryonic states.

As the colonies became established societies two problems emerged which called for decision by the home government. Free settlers disliked the constant reinforcement of the convict population, and growing communities would not rest satisfied without some real control of their own affairs. Transportation to New South Wales was accordingly stopped in 1840, and in 1842 a change was made in the system of government. The legislative council was enlarged to thirty-six, two-thirds of its members being elected by the colonists and the other third nominated

by the Crown, subject to the proviso that not more than half of the nominated members could be officials. But this was only an intermediate stage of development, and the new constitution already foreshadowed the partition of the colony, for it divided it into three districts, corresponding roughly to the modern Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, while it provided that Victoria should have six representatives in the council. The Victorians regarded this as a bad joke, for both the poor communications and the occupations of colonial life made their representation in a council at Sydney illusory. In 1850, when representative government was accorded to Tasmania and South Australia, it was enacted that Victoria should be separated from New South Wales under the same form of constitution.

The act of 1850 contained a remarkable provision of which the colonists soon made use. It authorized them to frame constitutions for themselves and submit them for approval. In 1855 New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania all obtained acts granting responsible government, though their constitutions differed slightly in detail. But it is significant that they reached this stage of development only eight years after responsible government had been definitely established in Canada by the clear-sighted firmness of Lord Elgin, and it is equally significant that constitutions devised by the colonists for themselves were ratified without difficulty by the imperial parliament. Queensland was not long behind Victoria in securing its separate government. In 1859 it was divided from New South Wales, and at once secured responsible government without passing through a probationary period. Western Australia developed more slowly, largely through want of labour. It craved for the convict labour which New South Wales refused in 1840, and of which Tasmania was to rid itself in 1853. On the petition of the colonists the home government began to send convicts to Western Australia as the other outlets were closed, and though this helped to increase the prosperity of the colony it tended also to delay its political development. Nevertheless, the rapid growth of self-government in Australia and Tasmania

COLONIZATION OF NEW ZEALAND

can fairly be reckoned one of the most remarkable features in the progress of the British people during the nineteenth century.

While Australia was being colonized, New Zealand was for a long time neglected. Sporadic settlements had been made there by sealers, whalers and traders—not all of them English—as early as 1792. Missionaries, led by the Rev. Samuel Marsden—a famous figure in the life of New South Wales—had established themselves at Bay of Islands, partly with the object of converting the Maoris and partly to protect them from the lawlessness and greed of uncontrolled Europeans. But the movement towards active colonization was slow, and until 1839 the home authorities regarded the Maoris as forming a sovereign and independent state. By 1836 Wakefield was lamenting that we were about to colonize New Zealand, but in “a slovenly and scrambling and disgraceful manner.” Stimulated by fears of French enterprise, the government at last decided in 1839 to annex the islands. But the Maoris were a formidable and, in the



CAPE TOWN AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

From a contemporary Woodcut, by courtesy of "South Africa."

North Island, a numerous race. They could not be ignored as the few and rapidly disappearing aborigines had been ignored in Australia. They had, too, a tribal land system, and land could be alienated only by the tribe, though early traders and settlers had dealt with individuals or even tried to act as if the country were an unpopulated waste in which the land could be occupied at will. This mistake was made by a large group of settlers sent out by the New Zealand Land Company, an enterprise promoted by Wakefield with the idea that he could deal with the home government alone and use the price

paid for land by the settlers to form an emigration fund.

In 1840 the British governor made with the chiefs of North Island the Treaty of Waitangi. The chiefs accepted the Queen of England's authority. In return they were given a guarantee of their rights of possession in the land, provided that if any were sold the Crown should have the first right of purchase, the intention being to control in this way the purchases of settlers by making the government the intermediary. Owing to misunderstandings there was considerable



DURBAN IN 1842

From a contemporary Drawing, by courtesy of "South Africa."

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doubt about the validity of earlier bargains, and there was much laxity in the enforcement of the treaty upon colonists. In



SIR BENJAMIN D'URBAN

By courtesy of "South Africa."

consequence many individual purchases were made and the hostility of some of the native tribes was aroused.

From this and other causes sprang the Maori wars, which were not wholly suppressed until 1854 under the wise and vigorous governorship of Sir George Grey. The colony was rapidly settled by a great variety of enterprising bodies, some of them religious, others moved only by colonizing zeal. For a time the governor was assisted by nominated councils. But by the middle of the century there were over twenty-five thousand white settlers in New Zealand and the colony was ready for a more advanced form of government. In 1853, shortly before Grey left the colony, which he had done much to establish in peace and prosperity, a representative system was set up. The new parliament was no sooner assembled than it demanded responsible government. This was at first refused by the acting

administrator, but in 1856 the colonists gained their wish, though the Crown still retained a measure of control over native affairs in order to secure adequate protection for Maori rights. Once again the Canadian precedent showed its value.

When the British people undertook responsibility for the Dutch settlement at the Cape they came face to face with all the problems which confronted them in Canada or Australasia, but differently proportioned. European settlers of a different, though not irreconcilably different, stock were on the ground before them; there was a native problem of vastly greater magnitude than any that appeared elsewhere; and the constitutional tangle became far more complex than in any other British colony of considerable extent.

The key to most of the early troubles of South Africa can be found in the condition of the native races. In North America the Red Indian had faded away before the European colonist. On the Australian mainland the few aborigines gradually disappeared and at no time were a serious menace. In Tas-



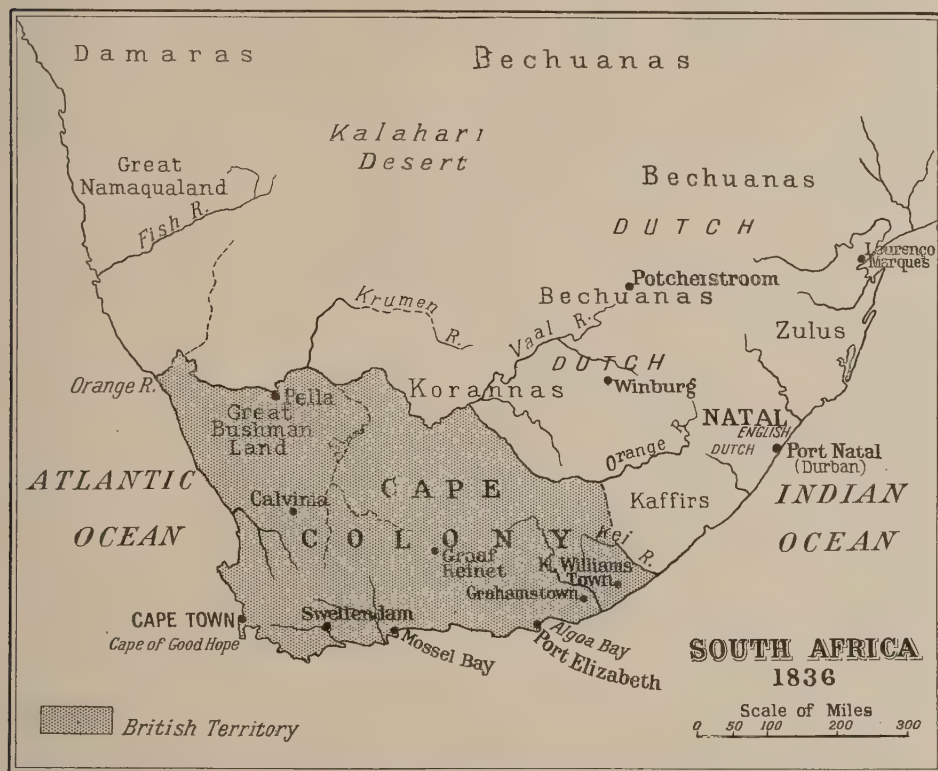
SIR HARRY SMITH

From the Lithograph in the British Museum by E. Dalton, after the Painting by the lithographer.

OPPOSING PRINCIPLES IN SOUTH AFRICA

mania they were driven into a corner, and transported to Flinders Island, where they ultimately died out. Even the more vigorous and intelligent Maoris showed weakening vitality in contact with Europeans. But in South Africa there were not only the less vigorous Bushmen and Hottentots of the

presence in South Africa of a black population. The 26,000 European colonists settled in Cape Colony by 1814 were mainly Dutch. The Boers, as they were called, saw nothing evil in the system of slavery, but it speedily brought them into conflict with British missionaries who regarded it with horror.



region around the Cape, but the more virile and warlike Bantu tribes, represented in our first contact with them by the Zulus, who were pushing downwards from the northward to the southern lands in which they were comparative new-comers, like the Europeans themselves. The Bantus, far from vanishing when they came into contact with European communities, proved a formidable military danger. That danger, paradoxically enough, became one of the compelling causes of British territorial expansion.

Nor was this the only consequence of the

This conflict was a clash of opposing principles. The Boers, nurtured on the Old Testament, saw in the blacks only hewers of wood and drawers of water for a chosen people: the missionaries, inspired by the New Testament, had come not only to convert the native but to raise him to a higher rank of civilization—a social as well as a religious mission. Some stories of Boer cruelty to the slaves may be discounted, but the missionaries were convinced that the system, with all its temptations to cruelty, was an evil thing, and the Boers resented what they looked

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upon as the meddling interference of the missionaries.

British opinion seemed to be wholly on the side of the missionaries, who had the ear of the colonial office. This impression was confirmed when slavery was abolished and it was found that the compensation to the slave-owners amounted to something less than half the value of the slaves. This loss was increased by a method of payment which suited the West Indian planter but had the effect of cheating the Boer farmer out of a portion of his rights. Partly from sheer maladroitness, a glorious achievement of humanitarianism led to distress and even ruin. The grievance long rankled in the Boer mind.

Cape Colony Settlements

In the years 1820 and 1821 the inflow of British colonists began, and about five thousand people settled in the colony, partly as the result of independent enterprise, but mainly through a scheme of assisted emigration. The immigrants landed for the most part at Algoa Bay, and they established themselves in the regions behind Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, which shortly became flourishing centres. These settlements brought the colony into closer contact with the Bantu tribes, and in 1835 a force had to be sent to clear Albany—as the settlement was called—of Kafir invaders. As a protection Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the governor, annexed territory up to the Kei River, but this action was disallowed by the colonial secretary, to the indignation of the colonists. Meantime Cape Colony was passing through the usual stages of early constitutional development. In the beginning it had been ruled by a military governor, who was grossly overpaid out of colonial revenues, and governed as an autocrat. In 1825 an advisory council was set up. When D'Urban became governor in 1834 a legislative council of five officials and five colonists named by the governor was added. This temporizing system satisfied nobody.

Then there came a schism in the colony. The Boers had a number of grievances: the marked preference of the home authorities for

the missionary view of native questions; the losses involved by the abolition of slavery; the abolition of the rudimentary Dutch system of local government; the substitution of the English law and language for the Dutch in the courts; and British disinclination for further expansion. From 1836 there began the movement known as the Great Trek. The Boer farmers moved out of the colony in groups, some to the region beyond the Orange River, others still farther into what became the Transvaal, others again eastward to Natal. They set up three little republics, at Winburg in the Orange colony, at Potchefstroom in the Transvaal, and at Pietermaritzburg in Natal, though they found British settlers already established in an unauthorized colony at Port Natal (Durban). In Natal there were desperate encounters with the Zulus, and while the colonists, under the leadership of Pretorius, were ultimately successful, the settlers in Cape Colony became nervous lest the natives to the east of them might be disturbed by the acts of the Boer republic. Finally, in 1843 Natal was annexed. Some Boers, after a vain attempt to check the British annexation, moved off at once into the interior. Others decided to give British rule a second trial: failing to obtain redress of grievances, they too determined to follow their comrades to the Orange and Transvaal territories.

Independence of the Transvaal

This second trek was in progress in 1848 when Sir Harry Smith became governor at the Cape. He tried fruitlessly to check it. When the Boers moved into the Orange territory, Smith determined on a bold policy and annexed the land between the Orange and the Vaal. Pretorius and his followers resisted, but were defeated at Boomplatz (August, 1848), and British authority was somewhat feebly established over the new district, now named the Orange River Territory. The arrangement was short-lived. Opinion at home was hostile to this rapid and financially burdensome expansion. Indeed, it was necessary to go farther or to draw back, for the Transvaal had not been annexed, and the twin experiments of a Boer state under British control on one side of the

SELF-GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Vaal and an independent Boer republic on the other side of the river did not promise much success unless the British administration managed to conciliate the Boers in a measure which it had hitherto conspicuously failed to achieve. In 1852 the independence of the Transvaal was recognized by the Sand River Convention, and this was followed in 1854 by an agreement (embodied in the Convention of Bloemfontein) to recognize the Orange Free State as an independent republic. The Boers had won the fruits of their strenuous and undeniably gallant endeavours, but the hesitations of British policy were unconscious preparations for future mischief.

If self-government in the fullest sense was allowed to the Boer emigrants to the Transvaal it could be denied neither to the British settlers in Cape Colony, now numerous and rapidly increasing in number, nor to the majority of the Cape Dutch who had taken no part in the Great Trek but had remained in the colony. Nor were the authorities prepared to deny it to the blacks in Cape Colony. So in 1853 representative, though not responsible, government was established. Both houses of the Cape Parliament were to be elected on a moderate franchise, and blacks as well as whites were to be entitled to vote if they possessed the requisite property qualification.

The history of South Africa in this period is less cheering to British readers than that of either Australasia or Canada. It is blotted by too many mistakes and reveals too much

official ineptitude to awaken any feelings of unmixed pride. But two things stand out as worthy of admiration: on the one side, the zeal of the missionaries, however mistakenly directed in detail and however unfortunate in some of its results, to establish a high standard of national duty in the exercise of our trusteeship for backward races; and, on the other side, the courage and energy, the persistence and self-sacrifice of the Boer farmers who took their lives in their hands and ventured into the far and unknown interior of South Africa to set up the standard of free government in accordance with their own conception of it.

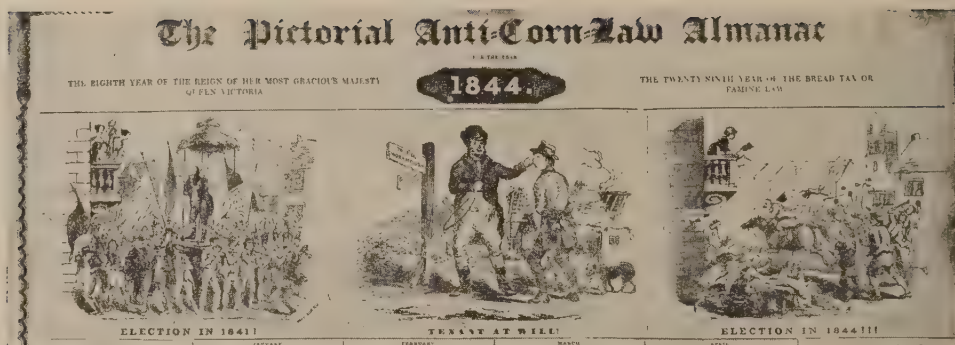
By the middle years of the nineteenth century the principles of British colonial policy were well on the way to be settled in their main outlines. British statesmen were not yet aroused to enthusiasm for an achievement which owed much to voluntary and sometimes a little to unwilling enterprise. But the gloom of forty years before was largely dispelled, and the great association of free nations which forms the British Commonwealth was almost fully planned. By the middle 'fifties Sydney Smith's gloomy prophecy of an Australian war of independence excited by a tax on kangaroo skins seemed less humorous than grotesque. The colonies, entrusted with the responsibilities of their years, and because they were so trusted, remained members of the family.*

* See Sydney Smith's curious review of *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, by Governor Collins (*Edinburgh Review*, 1803; reprinted in *The Works of S.S.*, ed. 1850).



TRANSPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA BEFORE THE RAILWAYS

By courtesy of "South Africa."



Reproduced, by permission, from the Woodcuts printed and published by J. Livesay, "Struggle" Office, Preston, now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.

CHAPTER X

THE TRIANGULAR CONTEST—CONSERVATIVES, CHARTISTS, AND CORN LAW REPEALERS (1841-6)

"IT is no easy task to govern this country," wrote Graham after rather less than a year's experience at that clearing-house for public discontents, the home office. Ministers had found the country in a perilous state. The dangers are defined by Graham's biographer as economic and moral, and broadly interpreted the phrase is a clue to the difficulties of the time. Though the foundations were being laid in the 'forties for the great prosperity of the third quarter of the century, the people were feeling the full stress of these industrial changes which had been in progress for fifty or sixty years and were now, with increasing and in some ways unhealthy rapidity, creating a new England. Industry had increased its productive capacity by the extended adoption of machinery and steam-power, by the reorganization of manufacture, and by the development of more elastic systems of credit which brought fresh capital to the aid of enterprise. But machinery had been adopted more quickly than displaced labour could be re-absorbed. Production had either outstripped the discovery of new markets or overloaded the channels through which manufactured goods could now reach purchasers able and willing to buy them at prices which would be remunerative alike to the capitalist and to the artisan. "Advances

of capital made by banking speculations, and rivalry aided by improved machinery perpetually displacing adult manual labour," wrote Graham to Peel shortly after the formation of his ministry, "have so stimulated and increased production that the civilized world cannot consume our articles with sufficient rapidity."

Everywhere there was economic distress and political uneasiness. The manufacturers were in dismay if not actually panic-stricken: the workmen underpaid and discontented, if not unemployed and starving—sullen at the best and at the worst violent. By an unhappy and dangerous contrast a country which had multiplied almost beyond calculation its power of producing useful and necessary articles of manufacture, and was already set on the high-road to prosperity, was disfigured by deep and widespread poverty. The home as well as the foreign market was in a dangerous condition of stagnation. It is true that the period was one of falling prices, and such periods are as a rule favourable on the whole to the wage-earner. But in this case the fall brought him little relief, partly because his standard of living was too low and partly because the fall was mainly in raw materials and manufactured goods. Foodstuffs, upon which the bulk of his in-

MISERY IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

come was spent, either fell very slightly or in some cases, and those the most important, even rose a little.

The low standard of living was due, first, to the over-stocked condition of the labour market, through the use of the unskilled labour of women and children to tend machines, which in any case must have absorbed fewer workmen in proportion to their product than the hand industries; secondly, to the low wages earned by hand industry itself, sorely stricken as it was by the competition of the machines. If the market had been more elastic and receptive the growth of demand might have enabled industry to absorb the displaced labour with greater rapidity. But the protective system clogged the wheels of exchange. The workman was often making things of which he was in dire need. Yet he could not hope to buy them for himself, because the price of staple articles of food, which in their turn were kept dear by protective duties, was so high that his earnings were swallowed up in the purchase of the necessities of life.

It seems indeed probable that thousands of industrious families were underfed, not occasionally and by accident, but constantly and by enforced habit. Large masses of the people were not merely half-fed but ill-housed, miserably clad, and less than half-educated. Nor were misery, ignorance and want any monopoly of the mushroom towns which had sprung up in the new urban districts. The country was as bad as the town, the old town as bad as the new. Against towns like Manchester, where one in ten, or Liverpool, where one in seven of the inhabitants dragged out a darkened existence in sunless cellars, can be set the overcrowded country parishes, like the Dorsetshire village where an average of thirty-six persons occupied each dwelling. When families starved for want of so much as a single blanket in places like Rochdale, where blankets were made; when the Devonshire labourer sometimes earned as

little as 6s. a week, and seldom saw meat or tasted milk; when a fellow-labourer in Somersetshire earned 7s. for the support of himself and a wife and five children, spending 4s. 6d. on bread, 1s. 6d. on rent, 6d. on fire, and reserving a magnificent balance of 6d. for potatoes, clothing and—luxuries; and when a growing industrial town like Oldham was without a single public day-school of



SIR JAMES GRAHAM

From the Lithograph in the British Museum by E. Demaisons, after the Painting by the lithographer.

any kind, it is not surprising that Carlyle spoke of the "condition of England question" as one which clamoured for an answer. If these facts do not entirely bear out the view of a contemporary statesman, "that a manufacturing people is not so happy as a rural population," he was right when he said that the country was feeling some of the disadvantages of becoming "the workshop of the world."

Ministers had not merely to deal with the social and political diseases of a distempered state; they were assailed by the cries of rival medicine-men, each with his own prescription to advocate. First there were the socialists, differing much in the detail of their creeds, who were at one in ascribing the evils of the time to the monstrous growth, capitalism,

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and to the competitive working of industry. At the root of all their arguments lay the belief that the producer ought himself to control the conditions of production in association with his fellows; together they should enjoy the product of their united labour. Robert Owen seems to have been the first to use the word socialist; and so closely is the early prominence of socialism connected with his teaching that, although he was not the first of English socialists, it was by the name of Owenites that the believers in various forms of socialistic doctrine were in these years popularly known.

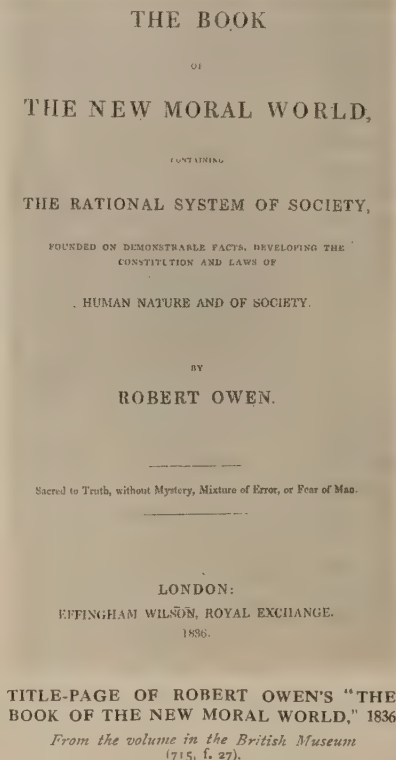
Socialism or Owenism stands for a class of ideas, an attitude of mind, rather than for any uniform creed. Owen, with his genuine but ever-changing idealism, gave it differing forms from time to time. He was a seer and a prophet: a Jeremiah thundering against misery and want and the iniquitous distribution of wealth, which gave to some abundant superfluities while to others it denied even food and decency: a visionary hastening with impatient steps to the economic New Jerusalem of his dreams, rather than an organizer and guide with any gift for realizing his new heaven on the old earth.

Practical gifts Owen must have had, for the business success of his early years would have warmed the heart of the most individualistic worshipper of the gospel of "getting on." At his mill at New Lanark he had combined with commercial prosperity the organization of a model village. His schemes of social betterment for his workpeople and their families are still, when all the difficulties

are taken fairly into account, unsurpassed as an individual achievement. Nor ought the value of his assistance to the short-hours movement to be altogether forgotten, if the failure of the Grand National Trades Union has to be remembered on the other side of the account.

Owenism did not look to the State, but rather to the virtues which were to be found in voluntary association. Owen fathered more than one attempt to reach his end by some form of what we should now call co-operative production. But by 1841 he had turned again to his ideal of a co-operative community, "a village of unity and mutual co-operation, combining agriculture, manufactures and trades," such as he had projected in 1821, and had been the means of establishing at several places in Scotland, England, and America. From 1839 till 1845, when it was dissolved, he was governor of the Harmony Community at Queenwood in Hampshire. But for all his idealism Owen's genius seems to have been capable of working

with success only in the conditions of the old, despised economic order, and he could not organize successfully in terms of a society which conformed to his own "new view." Owen's genuine disciples were probably few. But it would be wrong to underestimate the effects of his work and teaching. For distributive co-operation owes a debt to him, since he did much to set afloat the ideas which made it possible, though it applied them in a changed form which he might have disowned; and if Owenism left few results of the kind that can be measured and tested, it helped to implant in the public

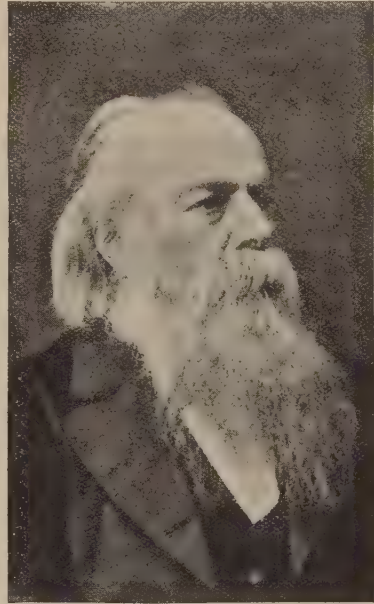


AIMS OF CHARTISM

mind a healthy doubt as to the perfection of the economic order.

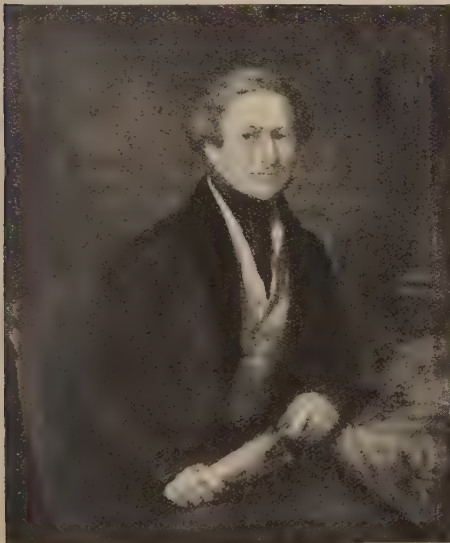
After 1839, however, Owenism was obscured for a time, as trade unionism was, by the rolling clouds of Chartism. Owenism and Chartism were in one respect alike : each meant widely different things to men of different types of mind. The Chartist movement was a popular impulse at least as much as it was an agitation in favour of a definite programme of political reform. It sprang from discontent with the Reform Act, for that measure had taken form in the mind of the working classes as a bill "to give everybody everything." As it came to be recognized that in composition and sympathies the Commons was less changed than had been hoped, disillusion followed rapidly upon the heels of expectation. For almost a generation after the Reform Act, country gentlemen were still predominant in the Commons, and the leaders of industry who gradually forced their way into the house were even less disposed to sympathy with working-class grievances than the landowner, whose interests would be little affected by their redress. Indeed, the artisan of the towns owed more in this period

than he quite realized to the assistance of the landed interest in securing improvements



HENRY VINCENT

From the Photographic Frontispiece to William Dorling's "Biographical Sketch" (1879), in the British Museum (10827, b. 7).



SIR ROBERT PEELE

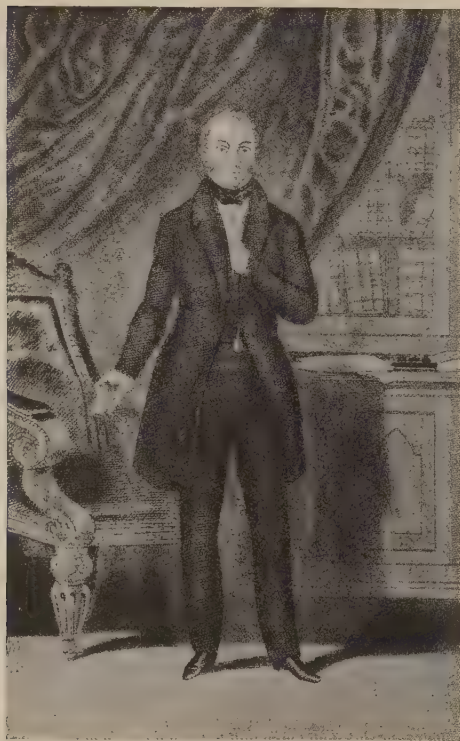
From the Painting by John Linnell, in the National Portrait Gallery.

in the control of industrial conditions. But the workman may be pardoned for thinking that he had merely exchanged one bad parliamentary system for another equally unjust. Generally, even in the towns, he was yet voteless, and was to be denied the franchise for another quarter of a century. Chartism therefore aimed at securing for him political control, just as, in a vague way, the Grand National Trades Union had sought to obtain the industrial mastery.

At the outset Chartism was tinged with Owenism, and uncertain threads of socialism ran right through it, but there was a still closer connexion between Chartism and the movement for an untaxed press. Several leaders in that campaign were amongst the founders of Chartism : Hetherington the Radical editor, Watson who had been his assistant, and later a printer on his own account, and Cleave a bookseller, all of whom were engaged in publishing, together with William Lovett, a cabinet-maker who

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had been associated with Owen in his co-operative enterprises, and had helped in the war against the newspaper stamp. These men founded, in June, 1836, the London Working Men's Association. Its objects were "to draw into one bond of unity the intelligent and influential portion of the



FEARGUS O'CONNOR

From an Engraving in "The Labourer," vol. ii.

working classes in town and country. To seek by every legal means to place all classes of society in possession of equal political and social rights."

Hetherington, Watson and Lovett belonged to the self-taught intellectuals of the working classes; they were not platform agitators, though Hetherington was a fair speaker; and Lovett's skill was that of the draftsman and the administrator, which made him, whether in trade unionism or co-operation, as in Chartism, what a modern writer has called "the universal secretary." One of the objects of the promoters of the association

was to confine it as far as possible to working men, who alone were admitted to ordinary membership, but it did not wholly disdain the help of middle-class friends, and it admitted Place, Owen, Feargus O'Connor and others as honorary members. And soon after its formation the society was joined by one of the orators and finer spirits of Chartism, Henry Vincent, an earnest enthusiast, if sometimes an unwise propagandist. By pamphlets and by missionary tours in the provinces the influence of the society was gradually extended, though even before it came very prominently into public notice there had shown itself a rift in the movement between the constitutionalists and the violent, which was later to widen out into the difference between the advocates of suasion and of physical force.

Of the famous six points of the Charter, which first appeared clearly in a petition adopted at a public meeting called by the association in February, 1837, five have since been wholly or mainly carried into law—adult suffrage, the ballot, payment of members, equal electoral districts, and abolition of the property qualification for membership of parliament—while the sixth, annual parliaments, involving as it would the yearly political orgy of a general election, is now desired by nobody in complete possession of his faculties. This programme, drafted in the form of a parliamentary bill, and with the substitution of manhood for adult suffrage, was published as a pamphlet in May, 1838; and in September the association promoted a great meeting in Palace Yard, at which delegates were elected to a Chartist convention. The association had, however, now done its main work; though it lasted until 1847, and even carried on a short-lived newspaper, it was no longer the directing force of the Chartist agitation. Too sober—one might almost say too sane—to fire the inflammable elements in the public mind, too exclusively set upon political reform to satisfy those who thought most of social wrongs, it found the torch snatched from it by more reckless hands.

It was Feargus O'Connor who was at once the bane of Chartism and the source of much of its vital energy as a popular movement.

POSITION OF FEARGUS O'CONNOR

A handsome Irish gentleman of a rebellious family, O'Connor had been called to the bar, had practised a little in a desultory way, had joined O'Connell and become an O'Connellite member of parliament for Cork. Later he had quarrelled with the Liberator, had lost his seat, and had joined himself to the more extreme of the London Radicals, who were making things difficult for the parents of Chartism. In 1836 he toured the north and

party. He settled in Leeds in 1837 as the proprietor of the *Northern Star*, a weekly Radical paper, "the worst and the most successful" of them all. When the Charter was published he at first ignored it, but ultimately he was swept into the general movement, carried the rebels against the poor-law with him, and posed as the captain of the Chartist host.

In the meantime the Birmingham Political



CHARTIST ATTACK ON THE WESTGATE INN, NEWPORT, 1839

From a contemporary Print.

found that the textile districts, as well as the hosiery towns of the midlands, were being swept by a furious campaign against the new poor-law, led by John Fielden, a Todmorden manufacturer, J. R. Stephens, a freelance dissenting minister who had been a Wesleyan missionary, and Oastler, the champion of the factory children. "The Anti-Poor-Law Movement, on its popular side, was, in fact," says Mr. Hovell, the first historical scholar to make a satisfactory study of it in its proper perspective, "a rebellion in embryo which never came to full development." O'Connor brought his fine voice and his torrential flow of words, untrammelled by nice regard for grammar or logic, to the service of the Anti-Poor-Law

Union had been revived, partly to advocate Attwood's heresies on currency. It had been virtually stampeded by the working-class advocates of universal suffrage and had begun to talk of a national petition. Its emissaries had also won a large following in the chief towns of Scotland. In August a great public meeting was held in Birmingham, attended by delegates from London and the north, which adopted both the Charter and the National Petition, and chose delegates to attend a Chartist convention. By the convergence of three (or more) movements Chartism had become a national demonstration of the working classes.

On February 4th, 1839, the Chartist con-

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

vention, consisting of about forty* delegates from England, Scotland and Wales, met in London. It was a disappointment alike to its promoters and to the general body of its constituents. During the three months of its

to touch. On May 7th it handed over to Attwood and Fielden the huge bobbin which bore the Chartist petition, and then transferred its sittings from London to Birmingham; and in June Attwood presented the "beautiful and majestic roll," as it was called by the *Northern Star*. The petition was reputed to be three miles long, and to be signed by one million two hundred and eighty thousand persons from two hundred and fourteen towns and villages. Next month Attwood moved for a committee to consider the demands of the Chartists, but he was beaten by nearly five votes to one, and the National Petition was dead.

The convention, now back in London, but, through defections and arrests, a mere rump of the original assembly, turned its mind to the old plan of a general "turn-out" or "National Holiday," a "Sacred Month" during which no man should work. But it could not agree on the subject; some were for it on one day and against it on another; and O'Connor, who was not free from the poltroonery which shows itself in a desire for the reputation of violence without its risks, performed the remarkable feat of speaking on both sides of the question in the same harangue. In August, 1839, the convention was ignominiously dissolved without reaching a decision.

But meantime the authorities had gone far to deprive Chartism of its leaders. Sometimes riots, as at Birmingham, sometimes speeches, and sometimes printed articles, placards, or pamphlets furnished the occasion for the arrests. Many of the more responsible leaders were already in gaol or awaiting trial by November, 1839, when the outbreak usually dignified with the name of the Newport Rising added the finishing touch to the alarm of those who regarded Chartism as a serious menace to public order. This



RICHARD COBDEN

From the Painting by Lowes Dickinson, in the National Portrait Gallery.

session the extremists gradually frightened away the moderates by their talk, sometimes veiled but sometimes open, of violence and arms. It was disheartened to find that even in friendly districts it did not command unanimous support, while there were parts of the country which it failed conspicuously

* The number chosen was fifty-three, but some did not attend, and estimates of the effective membership differ.



SHEFFIELD, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST, 1844

From the Engraving in the British Museum (1872-10-12-4836), by J. Harris, after the Painting by Henry Parlee Parker.

disturbance took place on a dark, wet night, its reputed object being to rescue Vincent, who lay in Monmouth jail; though since the insurgents assembled at Risca and attacked Newport, which is not on the route to Monmouth, they adopted a strange way of getting to their destination. Nobody knows how many rioters assembled; estimates vary from twenty thousand to two hundred, the number suggested by the most recent student of the unsatisfactory evidence. What is certain is that no more than a small body can have reached the main street of Newport, where it was ambushed by troops concealed in an hotel. Some of the rioters were killed and others were wounded—again the numbers are uncertain—and John Frost, their leader, with some of his comrades, was captured, tried for treason, convicted, sentenced to death, and ultimately transported for life.

Imprisonment of Chartists

There are many stories of a more serious and general rising which was to have followed Frost's conviction. Some truth there must be in these stories, but how far the projects were supported by the rank and file, or how far they were the work of those who were spies already or hoped to become informers when they had any sufficiently lurid tale to tell, no man now knows. Again, what is certain is that the suspected plots cannot have been the work of the original Chartist leaders, for most of those who had not long since deserted the cause were already in jail. O'Connor kept out of the net for some time, but in May, 1840, he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for sedition. It has been suggested that he only escaped so long because the treasury received £250 for the stamps on each issue of the *Northern Star*, to say nothing of the paper and advertisement duties; and "£250 a week covers a multitude of sedition." During the winter of 1839-40, it is believed, three or four hundred Chartists were in jail. Chartism was, for the time, a leaderless cause.

While agitation slept, ideas germinated. Oddly enough, most of them marked some diversion from the main political highway of the movement, though some were excellent in themselves. Lovett decided rightly that

what the people needed was more education; Vincent, that Chartists ought to be teetotalers; Vincent or one of his friends even issued a blast against tobacco; Collins, one of the Birmingham Chartists, started a Chartist church; and in Scotland the movement took a similar turn towards Bible or Christian Chartism. O'Connor would have none of these things, but impartially derided them all; his specific was a daily paper—a thinly disguised attempt to multiply his journalistic profits by six. But in July, 1840, an attempt was made to reorganize the scattered forces of the movement, and the National Charter Association was founded at Manchester, chiefly by followers of O'Connor. It moved slowly. In August, 1841, when O'Connor was released from prison before his time, there were fewer than two hundred branches; his unbounded confidence and braggart assertions seem to have given it a new impulse, and about the time that Peel introduced the first of his great financial reforms in February, 1842, the N.C.A. did, at any rate on paper, represent a formidable national organization of forty thousand working men.

Anti-Corn-Law Movement

It has been seen that Chartism showed a remarkable power of absorption: the remnants of Owenism were by this time drawn into it; it had also swallowed the northern movement against the poor-law; and it cast for a time its shadow over trade unionism, and sucked up some of the working-class energy which would naturally have been devoted to industrial organization. However, there was one movement which it could not absorb and which some, though by no means all, of its leaders therefore attacked with bitterness.

This movement was the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws. An Anti-Corn-Law Association had been founded in London by a group of Radicals as early as 1836, but though they educated opinion by expounding the facts which told in favour of their views, these Radicals had not the gifts which were required to popularize their case. Then in October, 1838, a new Anti-Corn-Law Association was formed at Manchester, which

WORK OF COBDEN AND BRIGHT

soon found a remarkable leader in Richard Cobden, the son of a stickit farmer. Cobden had gained some success in business as a calico-printer, and might have continued to prosper if he had not bent the whole force of his mind, and surrendered almost the whole of his time, to the battle for free trade in general and for the abolition of the Corn Laws in particular. We now know that in substance the duty on corn must have disappeared in any case. The tides of public opinion and of economic necessity were setting against it. Peel and some of his colleagues had shed many of their protectionist doctrines even before they entered office, as their correspondence now makes plain, but, even if they fully realized the lengths to which the logic of their own opinions was soon to carry them, they were still convinced of the necessity of special treatment for agriculture on grounds of national expediency, and they would still have been unable to move far until the ingrained prejudice in favour of maintaining the bulwarks provided by law for the defence of the landed interest had somehow been broken down.

Power of Cobden

To break down this ingrained prejudice required public propaganda, at first sight of a kind so repellent to popular audiences—for not many subjects present a less genial aspect than statistics and economic theory—that no man without a touch of genius could have undertaken it with success. But Richard Cobden possessed the precise gifts needed—knowledge of business, familiarity with foreign countries acquired by travel, a quick and apprehensive mind which could grasp a principle and not merely store a detail but keep it ready for instant use on the right occasion, together with unrivalled skill as a popular expositor, lucidity of thought and speech, and an uncanny knack of making statistics interesting. He had, moreover, the rare power of making an audience feel not only that his subject was one which all sensible men naturally regarded as of the first importance, but also that no sensible man could think about it otherwise than as he thought himself. This is the power

which sways juries; but marvellously multiplied, for Cobden's jury was the nation. There were occasions when Cobden could pass from reasoned persuasion to moving eloquence, but after the autumn of 1841, when he called upon John Bright, then sorrowing for the death of his young wife, to join him in a crusade on behalf of the thousands of homes in England where at that moment "wives, mothers and children" were dying of hunger, there stood constantly by Cobden's side one who was a greater far than he in the nobler gifts of speech. Bright was a Rochdale cotton manufacturer, a Radical by conviction and already an active campaigner against protection. This "young man whose short words smote like sledge-hammers," but were delivered in a voice of bell-like clearness and strength, could carry conviction to the minds of his hearers, but he could also move their hearts. Cobden denounced the Corn Laws as commercial suicide; to Bright they were an outrage against morality, and a wrong against every natural feeling of pity and compassion. It has been well said of Bright and Cobden that in this warfare each was the natural complement of the other.

For three years before Bright joined him on the platform Cobden had been moving up and down the country, arguing, persuading and organizing. In 1839 he had begun to raise money for the support of his cause. "Let us invest part of our property," he said to the manufacturers, "to save the rest from confiscation." In many towns Anti-Corn-Law Associations were formed on the Manchester model, and in March, 1839, after the prayer of half a million petitioners had received in the House of Commons a hearing little more sympathetic than the Chartist petition obtained a few months later, the Anti-Corn-Law League was set up as a federation of the associations with a central organization and council in Manchester.

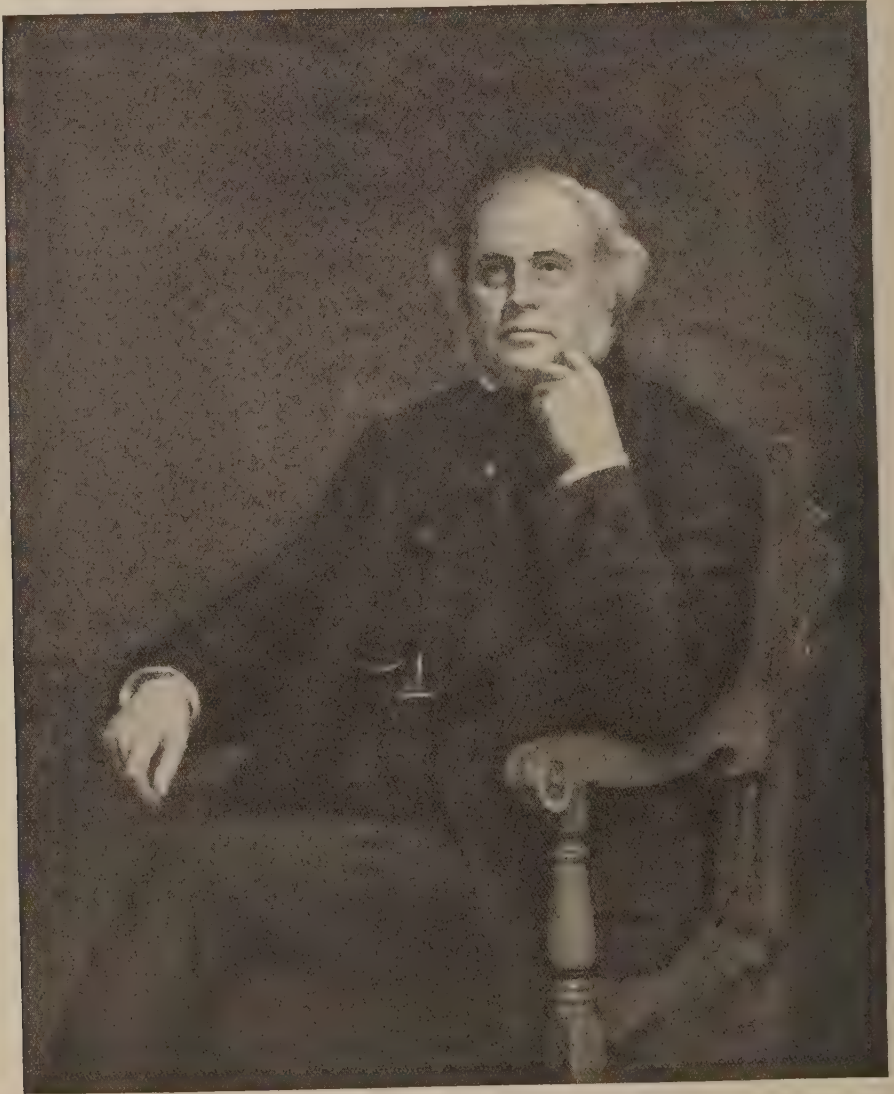
Hostility to the League

The league sent its lecturers through the length and breadth of the country. Often they met with a rough reception. At Arundel, we are told, a farmer offered a bushel of wheat to anyone who would

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throw the lecturer into the river. At Cambridge the undergraduates thoroughly enjoyed themselves, their pleasure being

horn, and the meeting turned into a battle between town and gown, for which the undergraduates had previously armed them-



JOHN BRIGHT

From the Painting by Walter William Ouless, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

in nowise diminished by an imperfect capacity for distinguishing between Chartists and Corn-Law repealers. The lecturer spoke to the accompaniment of a guard's

selves with bludgeons. According to the *Anti-Corn-Law Circular*, victory rested with the citizens, but the disturbers of the peace cannot have been wholly dissatisfied with



MANCHESTER IN 1844

From the Engraving in the British Museum (1901-10-22-2085) by T. Hignam, after the Drawing by G. Pickering.

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their achievements, for a local newspaper congratulated them on having done their duty as "the friends of good government, and the upholders of the religious institutions of the country." The connexion between unlicensed bludgeon-play and the support of government or religion may escape the modern mind, but much might be forgiven to a provincial newspaper at a time



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

From the engraved Frontispiece to his "Poems" (1840).

when the London press was denouncing the leaguers as commercial swindlers, self-conceited socialists, and a disloyal faction, or by any other name that the ingenuity of malice or the half-conscious untruthfulness which springs from bad temper might suggest. The *Morning Post* told the manufacturers plainly that if they were unwilling to eat British corn at British prices they might take their manufactures away and sell their goods anywhere they would, "from Tobolsk to Timbuctoo."

More serious than the opposition of landlords who intimidated innkeepers into refusing the lecturers sleeping-room or frightened printers into declining to print their placards, more serious still than the action of a magistrate at Louth, who, worsted in argu-

ment, revenged himself by first driving a repeal meeting into the road and then fining its promoters for obstruction, was the antagonism of a section of the Chartists; for this led not merely to many disorderly scenes, when Chartists broke up the meetings of the league, but also to a division of the forces which together had helped to carry reform. Between 1830 and 1832 masters and men had stood shoulder to shoulder; now, by their division, they played into the hands of the opponents both of an extended franchise and of an improvement in the fiscal system. It is impossible to blame the Chartists altogether, for the benefits which reform had given to the masters had been denied to the men, though both had shared in the battle for them. The agitations of the league were denounced at Birmingham as "the interested movements of the Whig Corn Law intriguers," a device to side-track efforts for a reform of parliament. This was, of course, unjust to men like Bright, who was an ardent reformer. But the opposition of the manufacturers to factory legislation and to trade unionism gave some colour to Chartist suspicion.

As Cobden frankly admitted, the cotton-lords were not more popular than the landlords. Working men believed that the attack on the Corn Laws was not entirely disinterested, and were apt to think that the enthusiasm of the leaguers for cheaper food sprang from the conviction that cheaper food would enable them to reduce wages. This may have been the opinion of the small fry amongst Cobden's supporters, but it was not the opinion of Cobden himself, who always maintained that the effect of free imports would not be to lower wages but to raise them. His eyes were ever upon markets, at home and abroad. If we wished to sell to the foreigner we must take something that he had to offer in exchange. The more we sold to the foreigner the more work there would be for British workmen, and the keener the demand for their labour, the better the price that they would obtain for it. Thus, in Cobden's view, freedom of trade would mean less unemployment and better wages. From this it followed that the working classes would have more to spend

CHARTISM AND FREE TRADE

and that the home market would improve. As the bulk of working-class earnings went in food and other necessities, even the farmer would benefit, for the home supplies of corn as well as the grain imported from abroad could be absorbed at good prices; and the workman who earned more money would eat more meat—he could scarcely eat less than

good which might result from it; others agreed with the leaguers in argument but either feared that the league might swallow up the charter, or were convinced that until the charter was carried the Corn Laws could never be repealed. Some were Protectionists, like O'Connor; others were Free Traders first and Chartists second, like Ebenezer



PAISLEY IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

From the Aquatint (1825) in the Lucas Collection, British Museum, from the Drawing by J. Clark.

he did in the late 'thirties or early 'forties—and the cattle farmer would prosper as he had not prospered for generations. These arguments were not universally accepted then, nor have they been universally accepted since, but as the campaign went on Cobden converted by them not merely the bulk of the manufacturing population but many farmers as well. And it may be added that, even if it be allowed that the leaders of industry supported Cobden from motives of self-interest, a good thing does not in itself become bad because it is done for selfish reasons.

Many Chartists thought that they could detect the selfishness, but were blind to any

Elliott. Thus the Chartists were themselves divided in opinion both on the merits of the case and on the tactics to be adopted. "I am for your Charter," said Elliott, "but I am not for being starved to death first." Lovett had no hopes of repeal before a thorough reform of parliament. He belonged to the moral force section of Chartism, but broadly speaking it was the physical force party and the more immediate followers of O'Connor who were most actively opposed to the league, and it was during their domination, after the failure of the petition of 1839 and while the Chartists leaders who most firmly believed in argument were in prison, that the attacks upon the leaguers

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grew violent. In 1840 and 1841 meeting after meeting was interrupted or broken up, and it was not till 1844, when Cobden met and worsted Feargus O'Connor in open debate at Northampton, that this fratricidal strife was stayed.

None the less there is plenty of evidence to show that, at bottom, Chartism was an

the workhouse is crowded, and the manufactory is deserted." So ran a passage in the Chartist petition of 1839. There hangs above me as I write an old print, yellowed with age, of the Chartist procession which escorted the petition of 1842; one of the banners bears the legend, "More Pigs and Less Parsons," a two-edged sword against

starvation and the tithe. It was, moreover, as we have already seen, to its capture of the movement against the new poor-law, in essence a fight for outdoor relief and against the "Bastille," that Chartism owed its first grip on the north. And O'Connor, although he thundered against the Cobdenites, had himself to attempt a solution of the economic problem in his later schemes of land-settlement. Chartism owed its programme to the intellectuals among the London workmen; but its driving force came from the need of the masses for bread and clothing, for homes and cheerful hearths.

Cobden and his followers had, then, diagnosed better than the Chartists the true nature of the national disease and had prescribed the most immediately effective remedy. In principle Peel and some of his colleagues had already recognized this. Peel had told the Commons in 1839 that "unless the existence of the Corn Law" could "be shown to be consistent, not only with the prosperity of agriculture and the maintenance of the landlord's interest, but also with the protection and the maintenance of the general interest of the country, and especially with the improvement of the condition of the labouring classes, the Corn Law was practically at an end." All the suffering of the people, Graham told Peel at the outset of their task, "will be brought to bear with concentrated violence on our Corn Laws and Provision Laws."

"Peel is a Free Trader," wrote Cobden a few months later, "and so are Gladstone and Ripon." So was Graham, who wished to see "the tariff examined, in the spirit of extending to consumers relief from every



THE MODERN CERES: THE SLIDING SCALE

Peel's "sliding scale" is rejected by Britannia, since it still keeps a padlock on foreign corn.

Reproduced from the "Punch" Cartoon, February 26th, 1842, by permission of the Proprietors.

economic movement, however little this may have been realized by many of its leaders. Stephens had declared in 1838 that Chartism was "a knife and fork question"; "Good diet for the people and plenty of it," was the cry of a Sheffield Chartist during the same year; "Better to die by the sword than perish with hunger," said the workmen of the Potteries to a Chartist missionary; "The people want food and think O'Connor will get it for them," reported an independent witness in 1839. "Our workmen are starving . . . the home of the artificer is desolate, and the warehouse of the pawnbroker is full;

PEEL'S FINANCIAL REFORMS

impost which is not productive as a source of revenue," and to look narrowly into the eleven hundred duties which yielded a net annual revenue of only £360,000.

Deficits on the Budget

This scarcely went far enough, and it understates the extent to which the ministry was prepared to move in the direction of freer imports. To sweep away the numerous minor duties from which there was only peppercorn yield would be to remove vexatious barriers to trade; but others, which it was still more desirable to reduce or abolish, furnished a revenue that could not be sacrificed unless an alternative source of income could be discovered. "I cannot conceive a more lamentable position," Peel once said, "than that of a chancellor of the exchequer, seated on an empty chest, by the side of bottomless deficiencies, fishing for a budget." It was the position of the ministry now. They had inherited from the Whigs a deficiency considerable for those days. It had been accumulating year by year since 1838, and each year had been worse than the last. This deficit might, it was hoped, be met in part by rigorous retrenchment. A more pacific foreign policy than Palmerston had lately followed might make possible some reductions in military and naval expenditure. But to balance the accounts, and to find a surplus such as would justify necessary experiments with the tariff, a large and productive source of revenue must be found.

In these circumstances Peel resolved upon a bold stroke. He proposed an income-tax of sevenpence in the pound on all incomes over £150 a year. The proposal was unpopular, for the income-tax was regarded as a war measure, not to be resorted to in times of peace. Peel only ventured to ask for it for three years. But it was the corner-stone of his financial reforms. The budget of 1842 reduced the duties on seven hundred and fifty articles; those on raw materials were not to exceed five per cent., those on partly manufactured goods twelve per cent. On wholly manufactured imports the tariff was to remain protective but was no longer prohibitive. The Corn Law was amended by making changes in the sliding-scale which

had the general effect of halving the duty. On fresh and salted meat the import duty was lowered, butter and other food-stuffs being also admitted at a reduced rate. Around timber and sugar debate had raged furiously in the past. Peel would have liked to reduce the duties on both; he was able to reduce the timber duty, but that on sugar had to wait, for it was found that until measures had been taken to ensure supplies from fresh sources the benefit would not reach the consumer, as there would be no free market and the profit would go into the pockets of the West Indian sugar-growers.

Peel had tried to reduce the cost of living, to stimulate industry by reducing the cost of raw materials, and to encourage commerce by the removal of artificial restrictions. And he had not merely reduced the tariff—he had simplified it. On the whole his plan was comprehensive and far-sighted. The cost of his reforms he had also contrived to exact from those who could best afford to bear it, and the budget was therefore to some extent a means of effecting a much-needed readjustment in the incidence of taxation. Peel had also tried to deal fairly by the landed interest. "I believe," he said, "that on the general principle of Free Trade there is now no great difference of opinion," but as regarded the Corn Laws he thought that he had proposed "as great a change as was just or prudent."

Cobden's Attack on Peel

Peel was attacked on all sides. Cobden denounced the budget as a bitter insult to a suffering nation; he was hot against it because, he said, it still showed that ministers were legislating to keep up the price of food. They ran "the risk of spoiling not merely the animal but the intellectual creature. It is not a potato-fed race that will ever lead the way in arts, arms and commerce." On the platform he poked bitter fun at the minister who had taken the tax off cosmetics and caviare and left it upon the loaf of bread. Nor did the income-tax lessen his wrath. "How do our mill-owners and shopkeepers like to be made to pay £1,200,000 a year out of their profits," he asked, "to ensure the continuance of the corn

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and sugar monopolies ? ” Here Cobden had less foresight than Peel, for the triumph of Free Trade was won by the hated tax, and in obstructing its passing, as he did, Cobden was for once sinning against the light.

Whigs and Free Trade

The Whigs had little that was useful to contribute to the debates. Russell argued against the income-tax, saying that an adequate revenue could have been obtained if the duties on sugar and timber had been sufficiently lowered. This could have been countered by the simple question, “Why didn’t you do it ? ” But in fact, though it may have been true as to the far future, in regard to the immediate future it was false, since the legacy of Whig deficits forced Peel to find his revenue at once. Russell’s alternative to the revised sliding scale was the old Whig plan of a fixed duty of 8s. a quarter, of which Gladstone made fun as a “table-land ending in a precipice.” This quip won instantaneous success in debate, though it might have been applied with equal truth to every ungraduated tax or duty. But it owed its force to the dread that a fixed duty would disappear at the first strain, a probability clearly realized by Peel and some of his colleagues, which accounts also for the votes of the leaguers, who supported the fixed duty in preference to the sliding scale because it could more easily be destroyed.

Only the outer fringe of Whiggism was, as yet, in favour of complete freedom of trade, and there is something almost comical in the speech by which Palmerston managed to combine support of the Whig policy with a grandiloquent demand that “Commerce may go freely forth, leading Civilization with one hand, and Peace,” of which he was no very conspicuous promoter, “with the other,” and censuring the “dealers in restrictive duties” who, “with arrogant and presumptuous folly,” fly in the face of Providence, “fettering the inborn energies of man, and setting up their miserable legislation instead of the great standing laws of nature.”

Peel had also to meet a good deal of opposition from his own side. Disraeli was pressed by some of the younger Tories to lead an attack upon the Corn Bill, but, though he

was smarting under the affront which he believed had been put upon him when he was not included in the ministry, his part was not yet taken, and he pleaded a diplomatic engagement in the country. He even supported the rest of the commercial propositions by a clever speech, intended to annoy the Whigs quite as much as to help the government, in which he claimed that the policy of Free Trade was the natural inheritance of the Tory party. This contention is not without historical foundation, though Disraeli seems to have rested his case on the two doubtful assumptions that Pitt was a Tory in 1787, which Pitt would probably have resented at that date, and that Lord Shelburne was a Tory, which Shelburne would almost certainly have resented at any time.

Peel and the Tories

Peel had to argue a good deal with recalcitrant Tories. One he asks to consider, as a landed proprietor in the west of Scotland, whether a state of things which necessitated seventeen thousand people being supported through the winter by private charity in a place like Paisley “was quite compatible with the security, or at least the enjoyment, of property.” To the complaints of one of his friends against the reductions of the tariff, he replied that the difficulty would be to prove that it had gone far enough. “If you had to constitute new societies, you might on moral and social grounds prefer cornfields to cotton factories, an agricultural to a manufacturing population. But our lot is cast, and we cannot recede.” “We must make this country,” he adds in a later letter, “a cheap country for living.” To his colleague Graham he said, “We must advance in our present course of relaxation.” “The next change in the Corn Laws,” Graham wrote to Peel, at the end of 1842, “must be to an open trade ; . . . the next change must be the last.” If their followers had realized what was passing in the private correspondence of ministers there would, no doubt, have been a Tory revolt, and corresponding jubilation in the councils of the league. As it was, the Tories sulked a good deal in secret, grumbled a little in public, but did not risk the responsibility of

REVISION OF TARIFFS

wrecking a Conservative ministry. Cobden on his side denounced ministers as men without a plan. "You are drifting to confusion," he said, "without rudder and without compass." A little later Lord Stanhope was bewailing "the strange and lamentable spectacle of the vessel of State, navigated by the Conservatives and bearing the Conservative flag, steering a Whig course."

Both, as we have seen, were wrong—Cobden in underrating Peel's equipment as a navigator, and Stanhope in flattering the Whig capacity for steering a course adapted to the nation's needs.

Goulburn as Chancellor

For three years Peel and his chancellor of the exchequer, Goulburn, were content to nurse the country back to financial health. They did not at once succeed. In 1842-3 they spent more and received less than they had expected. This was partly due to the fact that the income-tax had not taken full effect during the financial year, partly to the depression in trade, partly to exceptional military and naval expenditure. The result was a disappointing deficit.

By 1844 Goulburn was able to pay off these arrears, to remove or reduce half a dozen duties, and to build up a reserve against more extensive changes of the tariff. He was also able to reduce the duty on foreign sugar grown by free labour. A part of his surplus was obtained by a reorganization of the national debt, which enabled him to reduce the interest on about two hundred and fifty million pounds of stock or annuities from $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. at once, and to 3 per cent. in ten years. Thus he secured immediately a substantial saving in the annual debt charge.

As to the future, ministers were careful not to give pledges that would limit their freedom of action. It was said of Gladstone's speeches in 1843 that all his arguments were in favour of Free Trade and all his parentheses in favour of Protection. Peel carefully steered a middle course, telling the leaguers that the new sliding scale had not yet had a fair trial, but refusing equally to give a pledge to the Protectionists that he would maintain it. His position was a difficult one, for, while

intellectually convinced that the Corn Law must go, he wished to avoid any sudden shock to agriculture and he did not think it wise to move too rapidly in advance of his followers. A decade later Cobden recognized the reality of Peel's difficulties; "as he was yoked with a majority of inferior animals, he was," says Cobden, "obliged to go their pace and not his own."

The Bank Charter Act

In 1845 the ministry felt able to undertake a second comprehensive revision of the tariff. Of the 813 import duties still enumerated in it 430 were abolished. All export duties were removed, certain vexatious or unsatisfactory internal taxes were swept away, and a great relief was afforded to the consumer by substantial reductions in the duties on both foreign and colonial sugar. Trade, too, was improving, and in 1844 Peel had given new and much-needed stability to the financial system of the country by the Bank Charter Act, which limited the note issues of the Bank of England as well as of the joint-stock banks. There can be little doubt that the commercial difficulties of the preceding years may be accounted for in part by the unrestricted issue of paper money, especially by the country banks, whose recklessness had endangered the whole system of national credit. Now they were forbidden to increase their issues. The Bank of England itself was to be permitted only to issue paper money backed either by what amounted to government security, or proportioned to its reserves of gold. As the joint-stock banks disappeared their rights of note issue were to pass to the Bank of England, which was to exercise the right only to the extent of two-thirds of the issue of the dissolved or absorbed banks.

Many people thought that Peel's plan was too rigid and would cause excessive stringency at moments of commercial crisis. But the act was designed to prevent, as far as might be, the currency dangers which help to bring commercial crises to pass. It made for financial stability. And its very rigidity in normal times rendered the power of the government to suspend it in times of panic a more effective shield against financial

disaster. Only thrice during the rest of the nineteenth century was suspension needful. Only once did the Bank of England avail itself of the freedom which suspension gave. On the other occasions the mere assurance of temporary flexibility was sufficient to carry the bank past the point of danger. But that abnormal flexibility owed its effectiveness to the normal strictness which, as Peel had perceived, was a necessary condition of a safe and solid banking system, and of healthy national finance.

Peel's Pacific Foreign Policy

Sound and vigorous finance depends upon policy in public as in private business. Policy in foreign affairs reacts upon national expenditure. An aggressive foreign policy, even when by happy chance it does not lead to war, brings with it direct expense in armaments, and indirect loss through commercial uneasiness. There was therefore a connexion, closer than might at first sight appear, between the pacific foreign policy of the Peel ministry and its efforts to aid the economic recovery of the country by making the exchequer solvent. It was no accident that the Manchester school, led by Cobden and Bright, were as insistent upon peace as upon Free Trade. Peel himself realized the close inter-relation of peace abroad with industrial prosperity at home. He held that fighting efficiency and preparedness for defence were the best guarantee against war, and, economist though he was, he augmented the fleet even by the budget of 1845. But he was of the temperament to regard international complications as difficulties to be solved by common sense and mutual agreement rather than by war and the threats of war. Aberdeen, his foreign secretary, put even greater emphasis on the need for peace, and even less on measures of defence as a means of avoiding war. And this temper was to remain characteristic of individual Peelites, even though some of them, led by Aberdeen himself, were subsequently to bear part of the responsibility for the Crimean War.

Aberdeen was a man of unswerving honesty and of almost morbid conscience. He was one of the few statesmen in whom a natural

disposition to think well of his fellows became a temptation to be resisted rather than a virtue to be encouraged. He was only too apt to think everyone as honest as himself. For the moment this was an advantage. After the blustering and suspicion of Palmerston, it was well that our policy should be guided for a time by a man who believed that there might be more than one opinion on a disputed question, and that the mission of diplomacy was the pacific adjustment of differences. Aberdeen's weaknesses were less serious during the Peel ministry, and his merits more valuable, than they were in the 'fifties. He was hesitating in thought, slow and anxious in decision, too ready to believe in the good intentions of other men, or of other states; and these were awkward defects in a foreign minister. But he was scrupulous and careful, patient and conciliatory, slow to take offence and ready to remove causes of misunderstanding. Members on the ministerial side in the Commons complained that his conciliation came perilously near to truckling, and that he was not as suspicious as he ought to have been of the designs of Nicholas of Russia. But it is too soon for any man to feel sure that he has read the riddle of eastern Europe aright, and Aberdeen's policy has its defenders.

Aberdeen and the United States

In regard to the United States and France Aberdeen was able to sweep away many difficulties and misunderstandings. Palmerston had been fiery and not very polite, with the result that several differences between Britain and the United States had remained unsettled when it would have been better to come to a clear understanding. In one case American territory had been violated by British officers, who had seized a ship belonging to a company of freebooters when it had sought refuge on the American side of the Niagara River. The zeal was pardonable and the cause just, but the technical violation of United States territory was indisputable. Aberdeen was not disposed to fray the feelings of our American cousins over such a trifle. He made suitable apologies and the matter dropped. A little consideration for wounded susceptibilities

was all that was required to allay American irritation.

In the second place, the boundary between the United States and Canada had been in dispute ever since 1783. It was as sore as old as American independence. By a series of compromises the dispute was settled, so far as the eastern side of the continent was concerned, and it was there that in those days the problem was most urgent.

The Ashburton Treaty

Finally, disagreements had arisen between the two countries in regard to the right of search, which Britain claimed to exercise in the task of repressing the slave trade. In order to stop the trade certain European powers had agreed to maintain a naval police off part of the African coast, but the United States had declined to share the task. Its seamen resented the claim to search American ships for slaves, and a good deal of bad temper had been the consequence of its enforcement. Now the right was abandoned by Great Britain, but she covenanted with the United States that both powers should keep squadrons in the waters frequented by slavers, and should endeavour to make them powerful enough to repress the trade. Thus the Americans scored a legal victory, while Aberdeen obtained all that he really wanted, an adequate means of bringing to an end the traffic in human life. This series of agreements was negotiated by Lord Ashburton, a member of the great financial family of Baring, who had married an American lady, and was well received in Washington. To achieve the settlement Aberdeen had therefore gone outside the usual diplomatic circles to find the appropriate envoy. It was a bold stroke, but a successful one. The Ashburton Treaty was denounced on both sides of the Atlantic; in the United States as a "humiliating surrender," by Palmerston as a "bad bargain for England." But it was neither so humiliating nor so profitless as continued discord between two branches of the English-speaking race.

There remained the problem of the western boundary between Canada and the United States: Less immediately important than the boundary problem settled by Lord

Ashburton, it entailed more acrimonious discussion. This dispute, known as the "Oregon boundary question," for a time defied Aberdeen's attempts to solve it. Peel and even Aberdeen himself used some warlike language, and equally warm words were spoken on the other side. But in the end Aberdeen offered a generous compromise. It was accepted by the United States, and the danger of fratricidal strife was once more averted.

Relations with France

Between France and England there was from 1841 to 1845 a close understanding, often endangered, but never completely destroyed. It was an affair of courts and ministers rather than of peoples, but on the whole the courts and the ministers were right and the peoples were wrong. Guizot on the one hand, Peel and Aberdeen on the other, showed mutual admiration and confidence. Queen Victoria, linked by family ties to the family of Louis Philippe, whose daughter had married Leopold of Belgium and become not merely the wife of the queen's favourite uncle but also her own personal friend, was eager to maintain the "state of good feeling." Twice, in 1843 and in 1845, she visited France, and in 1844 Louis Philippe visited England. This was all to the good. But the two countries were nearly involved in war by their agents in the Society Islands, a French admiral and an English missionary called Pritchard, whom Palmerston had made British consul in Tahiti. In itself the dispute was trivial, but the upshot was that after both the British consul and the French admiral had shown an amazing want of discretion, and no sense of responsibility to their respective governments, Pritchard was thrown into prison, though not before he had ceased to be consul. Opinion was much excited on both sides of the Channel. The French were irritated because they thought that Pritchard had interfered where he had no right to do so, and the British because one of their countrymen had been insulted and imprisoned. Ultimately, when tempers had cooled, the matter was settled by a money indemnity from the French government to Pritchard.

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Guizot was right when he wrote to Aberdeen in this year (1844), "We pursue a great and honest policy." But they pursued it in despite of their peoples. For when Guizot had accepted a solution of the "right of search" problem suggested by Palmerston in 1841, he was compelled in

peace, and when the French had secured from the sultan his promise to discountenance raids on Algeria by forces operating from his territories, they withdrew from Tangier, and British excitement died down. Unfortunately towards the end of Peel's term of office Louis Philippe changed his policy and endea-



GEORGE HAMILTON GORDON, FOURTH EARL OF ABERDEEN

From the Painting by J. Partridge, in the National Portrait Gallery.

February, 1842, to withdraw it in deference to French opinion. And equally, at the end of 1842, Aberdeen had been compelled, in deference to English opinion, to insist on the withdrawal of King Leopold from a tariff union between Belgium, France, and Switzerland which the English commercial classes regarded as an insidious French attack on Belgian independence.

British opinion was also alarmed, in 1844, by the advance of a French force in Algeria which was believed to threaten Tangier, but Aberdeen took great trouble to preserve the

voured to ingratiate himself with the eastern powers, using such expressions about England to the Austrian ambassador at Paris that Peel declared the *entente cordiale* to be in a pretty state. None the less Peel and Aberdeen had worked for peace with great persistence and common sense, and though neither the French nor the English found the policy of their ministers very exhilarating, Aberdonian mildness with security was much healthier for Britain than Palmerstonian dangers and excitements.

Peace abroad, and at home the removal of



THE RECEPTION OF LOUIS PHILIPPE, 1844

From an Engraving after the Painting by Franz Xaver Winterhalter in the Royal Collection.

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shackles from industry and commerce, had been the characteristic features of the ministry's policy. It showed a less firm grip when it came to deal with the conditions of labour in mines and factories, and Graham



HOW CHILDREN WORKED IN A COAL MINE

From the Report of the Royal Commission, 1842.

blundered more than once in attempting to deal with the situation by new legislation. He was assailed from three directions. In his first bill he tried to deal with education as well as with conditions of employment, and here he found the religious difficulty too much for him. The Free Traders were opposed to factory legislation, as they were hostile to trade unionism, on the ground that it interfered with freedom of contract. It was a little absurd to argue as if young children were able to exercise their sacred right of selling their labour in the best market or to bargain for reasonable hours. Cobden admitted that it was necessary to regulate child-labour, and it has to be remembered that Bright, himself a good employer, had some difficulty in believing that the horrors reported to exist in the factories of bad employers were truthfully recorded. He was one of the doughtiest opponents of factory reform. But the government found their third body of assailants on their own side in the Tory philanthropists, led by Ashley and supported by Disraeli and his friends. Ashley was constantly pressing the government to go farther than it wanted to go; the manufacturers blamed it for wanting to go so far.

At last there emerged from this triangular

contest two substantial measures of reform. In 1842 the employment of women in underground mines was altogether prohibited; boys under ten were not to be employed at all, and boys between ten and thirteen were not to work more than three days a week. Ashley had tried to make thirteen the minimum age, but had accepted the modified employment of boys of ten in order to make sure of getting the rest of the bill. In 1844, largely as the result of the pressure of public opinion upon a lukewarm House of Commons, Graham at last carried a factory bill that restricted the labour of

women and young persons to twelve hours a day; the figure would probably have been ten if Peel, who in this matter was nearer in opinion to Cobden than to Ashley, had not made the rejection of an amendment of Ashley's a matter of confidence, and gained a majority for the government rather than against ten hours. It is significant that the difficulty of securing these reforms was due to opposition in the Commons, not in the Lords.

In matters of working-class organization this was not a happy or a fruitful period.



HOW WOMEN WORKED IN A COAL MINE

As a result of the Report of the Royal Commission, the underground employment of women in coal mines was prohibited; boys under ten were not to be employed, and those between ten and thirteen not more than three days a week.

From the Report of the Royal Commission, 1842.

One successful experiment was begun in 1844, when the Rochdale Pioneers devised the machinery of distributive co-operation, an achievement in itself and the foundation of many more. But trade unionism was passing through a period of transition, one of detailed organization, and of cautious progress after the dash and disaster of the

REVIVAL OF CHARTISM

Grand National, which had sapped the strength of the movement for a time by drawing men away to trades unionism, a very different thing, although it looked and sounded so plausibly like a development of trade unionism. Independent local clubs and unions were becoming branches of national or provincial organizations of growing power, but "the fog of Chartism" rested upon trade unionism in these years, and it was not until the middle of the century that the obscure and detailed work of the period began to show its full effects.

Chartism had revived to some extent in 1842. A great petition with well over three million signatures was prepared and presented by Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, who asked that the petitioners or their counsel should be heard at the bar of the Commons. Most people in that day thought that the petition was demolished by Macaulay, who derided it as "a hubbub of words." Its essence, he said, was universal suffrage. "If you grant that, the country is lost"; for it is "incompatible, not with this or that form of government, but with everything for the sake of which forms of government exist. It means spoliation and plunder, repudiation of the national debt."

As between this attack and the Charter itself modern readers may have an opinion different from Macaulay's as to which deserved to be called a hubbub of words. But Macaulay was nearer the truth, if still unjust to some honest and devoted men, when he denounced the Charter as the nostrum of agitators who imposed upon the miserable and the hungry.

Graham was not far wrong when he said that the cure for Chartism was "... cheap bread, plenty of potatoes, low-priced American bacon, and a little more Dutch cheese and butter. . . ." "We must," he added a few days later, "keep down the prices of articles of first necessity." This was the policy of Peel's ministry. As it gradually took effect, as trade and commerce was bit by bit emancipated from the thrall of the old tariff, as business improved and employment increased, the bitterness went out of the Chartist movement so far as the general body of its supporters were concerned. It slowly ceased to be in the same urgent way "a knife and fork question." As yet the modified Corn Law remained. But for many months ministers had been telling each other that its repeal was only a question of time, when it was finally smashed by a blow from Ireland.



PROCESSION ATTENDING THE GREAT CHARTIST PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1842

From a contemporary Engraving in the British Museum (Crace Collection, xvi, 31, 76).



MAYNOOTH COLLEGE

From a Photograph by A. C. White, Dublin.

CHAPTER XI

"YOUNG IRELAND" AND THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS, 1843-6

IT has been said that in 1846 English landlords paid the penalty of half a century's neglect of the Irish peasant by a parliament in which landlords had been supreme. Between 1834 and 1841 O'Connell had done his best to obtain redress of Irish grievances, but he had allowed the agitation for the repeal of the Union to languish. He had no wish to make his parliamentary position difficult, for his policy was to use Whig friendliness for what it might be worth in order to win concessions by negotiation. He was often disappointed in the Whigs, but it was not his cue to embarrass the party nominally most friendly to Ireland by violent agitation. At the general election of 1841

only a dozen avowed repealers were returned to parliament. But about 1842 a group of younger repealers, known as the "Young Ireland Party," began to push O'Connell from behind. Agitation was then renewed, crowds attended repeal meetings, and the repeal "Rent" rose in a few months from £60 to over £2,000 a week. Nationality and self-government were the watchwords of the hour. If the satisfaction of national aspirations was good for Greece and Belgium, if self-government was good for Canada and New South Wales, then why not for Ireland? The hope of the repealers rose. The wildest tales gained credence. In Dublin a hall was built to hold three thousand people,

Marion Square
20th Nov - 1834

My dear Sir

You may imagine how I am surrounded
but I am most desirous to see you - It however
must (for reasons) be then - I want to thank
you most heartily for all the good - the
unmixed good you have done for Ireland and
the still greater good you visit and your
knowledge of the state of this country must
produce - I will ^{be} at home all the evening
and all the morning tomorrow - and all
the time - Anytime - any time you choose

Accept my warmest thanks in the name
and on behalf of Ireland - and believe me
always - with sincere regard

Very faithfully Yours
Daniel O'Connell

Wm. Cobbett Esq
M. L.

LETTER FROM DANIEL O'CONNELL TO WILLIAM COBBETT

From the original in the British Museum (Add. MS. 31022, f. 30).

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and the rumour got abroad that it was to be the new parliament-house of Ireland. Apparently nobody stopped to consider the absurdity of a parliament of three thousand members, though the boldest might have quailed at the thought of such an assembly, particularly in Ireland, where contentiousness flourishes side by side with eloquence. But in May, 1843, an Irish law-officer re-



"THE MAN WOT PLAYS SEVERAL INSTRUMENTS AT ONCE"

Lord John Russell gazes in dismay at Peel's versatility.

From the "Punch" Cartoon of July 5th, 1845, by permission of the Proprietors.

ports that "a settled conviction prevails amongst the Irish that repeal will soon be carried, and that repeal means what every individual happens to desire."

There was a strong opposition to repeal in the House of Commons and the agitation roused bitter feelings. Though the storms of Chartism had been weathered by means of the ordinary law, the repeal movement was countered by the old remedy of exceptional repressive legislation, which is like the pedagogic bad habit of shouting at children; it teaches the victims to believe that you are never in earnest unless you bluster. It seems clear that O'Connell was exercising a moderating influence on the hot-heads of Young Ireland when the government made

the blunder, in the autumn of 1843, of arresting him, with his leading supporters, on a charge of conspiracy and sedition. Convicted by a jury admittedly packed, he was fined and imprisoned. He appealed to the House of Lords, and by a party vote, though as it happened a just one, his conviction was quashed and he was released. But the injury was done, for while the "Liberator" was in jail the extremists had got out of hand and O'Connell could no longer exercise the absolute control of earlier days. It is only fair to say that Peel was badly served by the legal advisers of the government in Ireland and that he had all along doubted the wisdom of this attack on O'Connell.

When O'Connell came out of prison he raised a new cry; in place of a simple repeal of the Union he now demanded "Federalism." The ministry was somewhat alarmed. "If Ireland must have Federalism," said Peel, "so must Scotland. Why not Wales? Why not Wessex? And the kingdoms of the heptarchy?" As to Wales or Scotland, some people might have replied, "Why not?"; as to Wessex, that in England local government had a reality absent in Ireland; and as to the heptarchy, if the joke be taken seriously, that Ireland was a living political organism with a recent and separate tradition, whilst few people knew their place in the kingdoms of the heptarchy and the few would have contradicted one another. It may be that in treating O'Connell's new idea in a spirit of levity Peel rejected a valuable key to the Irish problem.

Federalism was neglected and almost forgotten until a young lawyer called Isaac Butt, now employed by the government to attack O'Connell's new policy, himself revived the idea in a changed form as Home Rule. But some of the sting had gone out of the repeal agitation, violence decreased, the repeal Rent fell off, and O'Connell himself, ill and sore at heart, had lost some of his old magic. Peel, possibly because he was less burdened with financial anxieties, seems now to have taken more definite control of Irish business. Hitherto he had owed his difficulties as much to Irish ministers as to O'Connellite agitators. The former were constantly at variance and

PEEL'S IRISH ADMINISTRATION

had no common policy. Sugden, the lord chancellor, kept getting the government into hot water by suspending magistrates for attending meetings which were not illegal, and by plunging into ill-considered political prosecutions on scanty evidence.

Peel was able to effect a wholesome change in July, 1844, when Lord Heytes-

wholly, intended for training priests. Peel held that it was better for them to be trained in Ireland than abroad, and that it was dangerous for such an institution to be so crippled for lack of funds that its work could not be done well. And in the same year he set up three undenominational colleges in the south, west, and north of Ireland.



THE POTATO FAMINE IN IRELAND, 1846

Starving peasants at the gate of a workhouse.

From a contemporary Wood Engraving.

bury became lord-lieutenant, and tried loyally to carry out Peel's policy of good sense and reasonable impartiality. He attempted to give a fair share of legal and official patronage to qualified Catholics and to render the legislation of the previous fifteen years a reality instead of a form. He showed what could be done by care and judgment in place of partiality and hot temper. Peel tried to be equally reasonable in legislation. In 1844 he made it possible for money to be left by will to a Catholic institution. In 1845 he almost tripled the grant to Maynooth College, an institution mainly, though at that time not

Economic problems were not so well handled, though they called for statesmanship of a high order. In Kerry sixty-six per cent. of the population lived in mud cottages of a single room, and in the best county the percentage was still as high as twenty-four. The yield of the land was valued at little more than half as much an acre as the yield in England. Too much reliance was placed on the potato as a staple crop, and fears were entertained that its quality was deteriorating. Communications were bad and the industrial possibilities of the country were little realized. Nothing was done by the ministry to develop the

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Whitstable
March 12

Sir H. E. Bunbury

I am sincerely
gratified by the
cordial approbation
you have expressed of
the great measures
which I am conducting
through Parliament

Evils and dangers
of which they seem little
aware.

I am very indifferent
as to the political, that
is party result - of
the conflict which is
now raging

I have many difficulties
to contend with -

Much misrepresentation
and obloquy to
encounter - on the
part of those whom I
heavily believe I am
protecting from

provided only the
Sovereign consent to
pass the Bills which
the Commons intend
up to them providing for
the improvement of our
Commercial system
and the ultimate
extension of

LETTER FROM SIR ROBERT PEEL TO SIR H. E. BUNBURY, 1846

From the original in the British Museum (Add. MS. 37053, ff. 37b-40).

POTATO FAMINE IN IRELAND

Taxes upon food -

This Country is now

very quiescent - but

the Calam is the consequence

of full reliance that

the Treasures must

speedily pass -

I presented His. or

I add also. as

a Right Letter of my

Request - a Copy of

a document of much

less importance.

I believe in

Lyden Pambury

both my best wishes for

your welfare

Wm. J. P. P. P.

Wm. J. P. P.

Thursday June 1845
accompanying Papers

Illustration of the Policy

which I have pursued

for the last four years

in repealing prohibitory

and reducing Protective

Duties -

resources of Ireland by means of better roads, by railways or by promoting instruction in agriculture. Peel appointed a commission under Lord Devon to consider the land problem, which reported in favour of extending the Ulster custom of tenant-right and compensation for improvements to the whole of Ireland by means of legislation; and Stanley introduced a bill to allow compensation to the tenant for improvements in building, draining and fencing. But the bill was denounced in the Lords as destructive of the rights of property and had to be dropped. None the less the government of Ireland in the later years of the administration had been a great success as compared with the failure of the

earlier years, and it had allowed animosities to die down.

Then came the catastrophe of the potato famine. Half the population of Ireland and part of that of England were dependent on the potato as a staple food, but the worst of a low-grade staple is that it leaves no resource in emergency. When a people, used to a cheap food, finds itself suddenly deprived of it and without an equally cheap alternative, it has to turn to a diet which it cannot afford in adequate quantity.

The failure of the potato crop therefore spelt famine in Ireland, and the Irish had no means of fighting the disaster. It was clear that the

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Irish peasants would have to be fed on corn, that the corn must come from abroad, that the country would have to pay for it, and that so long as the Corn Law remained it might find itself in the ludicrous position of having to tax itself on the imported corn while paying an inflated price for what was

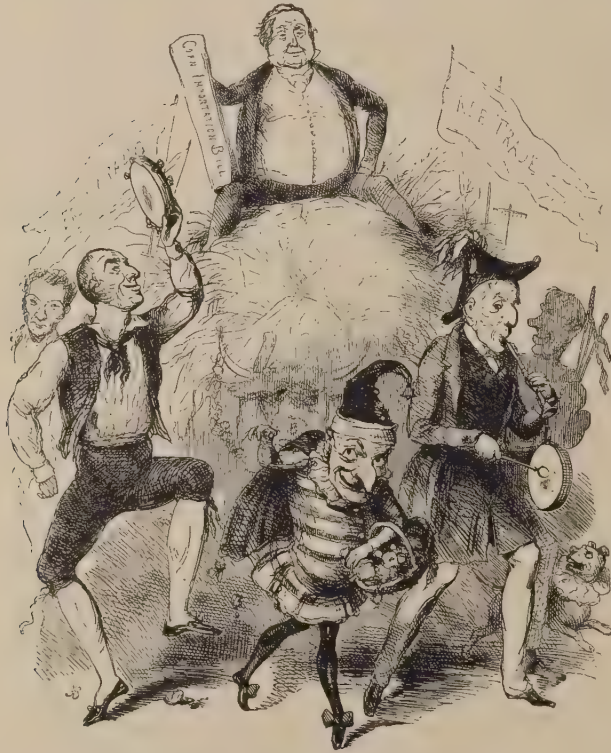
Law could stand the strain of another winter of acute distress. Peel took all possible precautions to stay the potato blight, but he told the cabinet that the only possible remedy was to open the ports. Then Russell issued what is known as the Edinburgh letter, in which he threw over the Corn Law, and exhorted the people to petition for its abolition. The Whigs had hitherto sat upon the fiscal fence; Russell had now committed them definitely to Free Trade. Whichever party leader were to undertake the responsibility of repealing it thereafter, it was clear that the Corn Law was at an end. But Peel found only four Free Traders in his cabinet. In the hope of saving his party he proposed a gradual reduction of the duty till in eight years it would fall to a shilling a quarter. Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch refused to accept the compromise. "Whatever country squires may think," wrote Peel to the chief secretary, "it is not safe to guarantee the continuance of the present Corn Laws." He resigned and offered his support to the Whigs.

Thereupon Russell tried to form a Whig ministry. But he met with difficulties in his own party, and he gave up the task, allowing himself to be rather easily discouraged.

grown at home. This system of paying the tax out of one pocket and putting it into the other would be difficult to defend, as Peel at once realized.

The Corn Law was in any case doomed. For some time the league had been gaining ground in the agricultural as well as in the manufacturing districts. Cobden thought that Peel was preparing to give way before the Irish crisis, and though this may be expressing his mind with more definiteness than Peel would himself have allowed, it is true that he did not believe that the Corn

It is hard to resist the feeling that at the back of Russell's mind was the notion that as repeal must be carried, whether by Peel or by himself, it would be better to leave the work to Peel, whose authority with the House of Lords might be greater than his own. Peel returned to office and reduced the duties in such a way that after three years only a nominal duty of a shilling a quarter remained. The measure was carried through the Lords by Wellington's influence, and on June 25th, 1846, the old Corn Law was dead.



THE FREE TRADE HARVEST HOME

From the "Punch" Cartoon of May 30th, 1846, by permission of the Proprietors.

REPEAL OF THE CORN LAW

Peel's success went no farther. He had carried his bill, but he had broken his party. Even the Whigs were by no means unanimous in support of the measure, and Melbourne, greatly privileged, openly damned the bill in the queen's presence. The rage of the Protectionists knew no bounds. Half the Conservative party thought Peel a traitor, the betrayer once more of a cause which it had been his mission to support. Deserted by Peel and the cabinet, they found a spokesman in Benjamin Disraeli, whom Peel had angered when he refused him office in 1841. For some time Disraeli's support of the ministry had been no more than that of a dangerously candid friend, and he had gathered round him a small group of the younger Tories. Now the repeal of the Corn Laws rallied half a party behind him, and with Lord George Bentinck he led the Protectionist attacks on the ministry with great skill and audacity. Peel had no longer a majority. On the day that the Corn and Customs Bill passed the Lords, Whigs and Protectionists, Radicals and Repealers joined together to defeat the ministry on an Irish coercion bill in which some of them believed but which others of them detested. Peel was weary of office, and it was as much in thankfulness as in sorrow that he resigned the seals. But the Protectionists enjoyed the sweets of revenge.

Peel in Retirement

Revenge might taste sweet in the mouths of angry Tories who had voted against their conviction, with a heterogeneous coalition of their political foes, in order to obtain it. But though they had wounded Peel by the rancour with which they had attacked him, mere loss of office contributed nothing to the bitterness of his feelings. He was utterly worn out with labour, anxiety and strife; with the struggle, prolonged over nearly five years, to reconcile a defence of the landed interest with the economic necessities of the country; with the effort to fulfil both his duty to his party and his duty to the nation. If there had been no such struggle of mind and conscience to harass him, Peel would still have been a weary man in June, 1846, for the office of prime minister, as he interpreted

its obligations, imposed upon him a crushing burden of labour and responsibility. "No man's health," he is reported to have said in 1846, "would permit him to be prime minister of this country for more than five years." But when both his ministry and his party were in a state of inward discord on a question of policy which could not be evaded, the leader's position became an intolerable one. "For myself, on every personal and private ground," Peel wrote to a friend in December, 1845, when he believed that Russell would succeed in forming a ministry to repeal the Corn Law, "I heartily rejoice at being released from the thankless and dangerous post of having the responsibility of conducting public affairs, and being expected to conform, not to my own sense of the public necessities, but to certain party doctrines, to be blindly followed, whatever new circumstances may arise, or whatever be the information which a government may receive." Our baser instincts prompt us to suspect the sincerity of public men who disclaim the wish for office or profess an anxiety to be rid of it; but no one can read Peel's correspondence without being convinced that he was genuinely thankful for his release.

Disruption of the Tories

It is possible to believe that the repeal of the Corn Law was for the public good, and yet to hold, with equal conviction, that it entailed a national disaster of no small importance. Peel's action had split the Tory party. For almost a decade the party system was, in consequence, disorganized, and the country was deprived of one of the main safeguards for stability and straightforward dealing which the custom of the constitution has undesignedly provided for us. Politicians and statesmen were reduced to all the inconvenient coalitions and compromises and subterfuges which the group system involves. Like the French Revolution before it, and the Home Rule controversy after it, the division of opinion on the Corn Law produced, for a time, three distinct parliamentary parties, the Peelites, the Protectionists, or as they sometimes called themselves "the country party," and the Whigs. And this was not all, for some of the Free

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Traders acted mainly as an independent group, while some of the Radicals felt almost as little confidence in the Whigs as they did in the Tories, and though the Irish repealers might give the Whigs their support, they acted in general politics only in such a way as to secure the largest measure of assistance in upholding what they conceived to be the interests of Ireland.

Some of the Corn Law repealers hoped at first that Peel would form a vigorous middle party. Cobden had toyed with the notion for some time, and might have felt more at home with Peel than he did with the Whigs. But in English politics a middle party has generally proved to be a particularly maddening will-o'-the-wisp. In this case, Peel's own attitude precluded any hope of success. His immediate followers gathered round him, but he was himself disinclined for office and unwilling to fight for it. He hated the notion of a fresh struggle in the House of Commons, and was unwilling to undertake again the painful, laborious, and thankless task of building up a new parliamentary party. He was therefore resolved never to take office again unless it became absolutely necessary in order to safeguard his free-trade settlement, and he was willing to assist any government which

would save him from a necessity odious to him. Politically he was, in the words of a colleague, "le mort imaginaire." If death had not overtaken him prematurely in 1850, it is difficult to see how he could have persisted in his self-denying ordinance, and there is some evidence that on the eve of his death he had come to believe that he might be driven once more to undertake active responsibility.

Without a fighting chief it was hard for the Peelites to use their strength. They were strong in debate, rich in ability and in administrative experience, but weak in the division lobby. Disraeli poured scorn upon them as "a limited but accomplished school." At first they numbered in the Commons perhaps fifty or sixty;* after Peel's death their numbers dwindled, until finally there were perhaps not more than thirty or forty Peelites who held themselves definitely aloof from both Whigs and Protectionists. In debate they were always dangerous, and in a close division their support was still important, but the political weight of the group was not proportionate to the ability of its individual members.

* An exact estimate is not possible: after the election of 1847 there were one hundred and five Peelites, but they afterwards dwindled.



SIR ROBERT PEEL

From a contemporary Print.



LIVERPOOL, FROM UPPER TRANMERE, CHESHIRE, 1846

From a Lithograph in the British Museum (46-4-30-1), after a Drawing by McGahey.

CHAPTER XII

PEELITES, WHIGS, AND PROTECTIONISTS (1846-8)

ABERDEEN followed after Peel in the leadership of the group. Calm, tolerant, and unsuspecting—except when Palmerston was in question—he fulfilled the needs of the moment. Even that want in his character of the spice of vigour, later to prove a serious lack, was not altogether a disqualification while the main object of the party was to avoid a quarrel with the Whigs until it had become impossible for the Protectionists to reverse Peel's free-trade measures. It was to Aberdeen's "weight, prudence, and kindliness of disposition" that Gladstone said he looked "as the main anchor of their section." That the Peelites were wise in choosing Aberdeen as their chief is proved by the

fact that under his leadership Whigs and Peelites were finally able to unite. Graham was a great administrator, and of all the Peelites he had enjoyed the fullest experience of office. Once a Whig, then a Tory, he was moving again towards the Whig position. But he had, in truth, a cross-bench habit of mind, and he lacked the supreme gift of leadership, the courage to take big decisions on matters of high policy. "My forebodings are always gloomy," he said himself; "I shudder on the brink of the torrent." An admirable chief-of-staff, he had not the temperament of a commander-in-chief.

Of the younger men the ablest was Gladstone, whose capacious intellect contained

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many hidden chambers and intricate passages. Nobody was ever more anxiously self-explanatory or indulged himself so copiously in explanations, and yet nobody was ever so difficult to understand. He revelled in qualifications and reservations as complex as his sentences; he thought of the next objection but three, and met it



SIDNEY HERBERT, FIRST LORD HERBERT
OF LEA

*From the Painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A., in the
National Portrait Gallery.*

before his hearer had thought of the first. And all this dialectical ingenuity was puzzling to simpler minds. It helped to create the impression that there was something disingenuous and tortuous in the workings of his mind. "It is *necessary*," wrote Bagehot in 1860, "that England should comprehend Mr. Gladstone." It may be that Bagehot was right, but the necessity was never satisfied. In later days many thousands of his countrymen became Gladstone's fanatical devotees, but he was constantly giving them fresh shocks of surprise by withdrawing from some curtained recess of his mind an unexpected idea or a bewildering opinion, to baffle anew even his own startled flock. "The key to my position,"

he said later of his views about 1852, "was that my opinions went one way, my lingering sympathies the other." Opinions, which were later to be called Liberal, battled with Tory sympathies and Tory friendships.

Even then he still wanted to be "Liberal in the sense of Peel, working out a Liberal policy through the medium of the Conservative party." This was a difficult course to steer, and it laid the too ingenious pilot open to suspicion from both sides; yet it was not more hazardous than Disraeli's contemporary effort to chart out the rocks of "Liberal opinions," which were bad, in the waters of "popular principles," which were good. Both were puzzling to the plain man, who might be dazzled, but who hated what Burke had called "metaphysical distinctions." And Gladstone himself came to recognize that there were few things more disliked by John Bull than an abstract proposition. None the less Gladstone had an intellectual vigour, a fund of energy, a capacity for hard work, a skill in the intricate detail of administration, hardly surpassed by Peel himself. In sheer eloquence he was Peel's superior, and he was a formidable debater. A contemporary predicted that Peel's death would have upon Gladstone "the effect of removing a weight from a spring," and the prophecy proved a true one. Thereafter Gladstone had to develop himself by himself. After 1850 there was no stronger character in public life. But it was fully a decade before he steered his barque into a safe party haven.

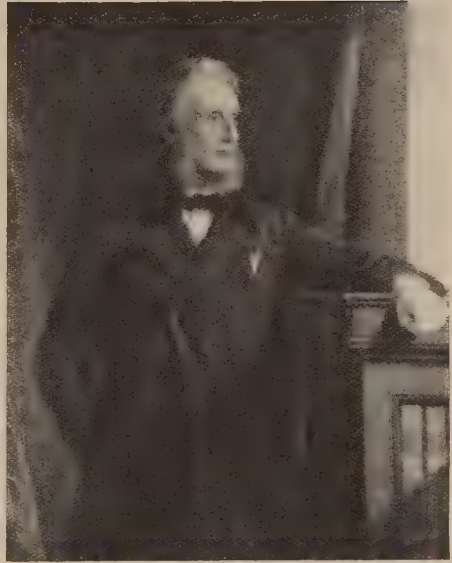
The rest of the Peelites, though very able, were men of less outstanding capacity. Gladstone's friend Lincoln (fifth Duke of Newcastle) was a man of brains and character, but he inherited the ancestral belief in the infallibility of the Pelhams, and the family calmness when disasters followed a misplaced reliance upon it. Lincoln aspired to the leadership of the party after Peel's death, but gave way to Aberdeen. Sidney Herbert, "one of the handsomest and most attractive" politicians of his day, had varied gifts and a sweet nature. He was a strong and incisive debater, and an administrator to whom full justice has seldom been accorded. Cardwell, nicknamed "Peel-and-

PEELITES AND PROTECTIONISTS

water," was a laborious man of careful judgment; his election for Liverpool in 1847 had been a great Peelite triumph. Goulburn, Peel's chancellor of the exchequer, was perhaps rather nearer to the Tories than most of his colleagues. The veteran Hardinge, who was in India at the time of the schism, was a close personal friend of Peel; and Dalhousie, who had won his spurs in Peel's ministry, may be reckoned a Peelite, though his appointment to succeed Hardinge as Governor-General of India soon withdrew him from English politics.

Since the Peelites were so strong on the front bench and so weak in numbers, it followed that, at first, the exact opposite was true of the Protectionists. They had the numbers but lacked the captains, or rather they had leaders but were not sure that they wanted to follow them. In the Lords their problem was simple enough; Stanley (Earl of Derby after 1851) held a commanding position, and was from the first their acknowledged leader, magnificent in a skirmish, but too impatient to settle down when party necessities called for siege warfare.

In the Commons it was otherwise. There



EDWARD CARDWELL

From the Painting by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

they had assembled, in 1846, an angry but a leaderless and almost an inarticulate host, scarce knowing where to turn in their fury and bewilderment. Unexpectedly they found a champion in Lord George Bentinck, who had sat for eighteen years in the house, without, as he said himself, having taken part in any great debate. To use Disraeli's words he was fundamentally "a Whig of 1688," but he had been a Canningite, and for three years had been Canning's secretary. Like most other Canningites he had supported Grey and he had voted for the Reform Bill, but his closest political sympathy had been with Stanley. With Stanley he had parted from the Whigs, with Stanley he supported Peel, and with Stanley he quitted him. Friendship, esteem, and common distrust of the new policy in regard to the Corn Law bound him to the Protectionist leader in the upper house.

Bentinck was eager, honest and frank; he was not without brains, though he had not hitherto strained them by excessive exercise; he had great energy, unflinching tenacity, and some organizing skill; he had a commanding presence, and, above all, he had the great



LORD GEORGE BENTINCK

From the Painting by S. Lane, in the National Portrait Gallery.

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quality called character, more valuable than the most dazzling gifts in the leadership of men. In many respects he was not unlike Althorp; his real interests, like Althorp's, were in the country, and especially in the hunting-field. Often he had appeared towards the end of a debate to record his vote in a close division, wearing a white overcoat over his hunting scarlet. A devotee of the turf, he preferred horses to politics. Newmarket was nearer to his heart than Westminster. But, stung by Peel's desertion of the Protectionists, he came forward as their leader, sold his horses, including the winner of the next Derby, and with distasteful but unflagging industry devoted himself (in order to rally the party) to the hard labour of parliamentary business. "I keep horses in three counties," he said to a Free Trader, "and they tell me that I shall save £1,500 a year by Free Trade. I don't care for that. What I cannot bear is being sold." Being sold was just what the country squires could not bear, and they gave him their aid. "Being a natural leader of the people," says his biographer, "he was equal to the post."

Yet it may be doubted whether Bentinck would have been equal to the task of moulding the scattered and dispirited forces of the Protectionists into an effective opposition if he had not been guided and sustained by Benjamin Disraeli, that strange and enigmatic statesman whom six volumes of biography have scarcely sufficed to explain.

Rise of Benjamin Disraeli

Disraeli was a man of letters and the son of a man of letters; he sprang from an alien race; his forbears had professed a religion against which British prejudice was yet strong, and though he had been brought up as a member of the Church of England, the religious prejudice still followed him; he was poor, and his poverty was aggravated by the mysterious "operations" by which he unskilfully endeavoured to extricate himself from debts incurred in early life. He had therefore to cut his way through a formidable barrier of disadvantages: dislike of the Jew, distrust of the man of letters, want of family (at a time when family

counted for much in politics), want of money (at a time when money seemed almost the only substitute for the influence of a great house), and an early career politically puzzling and otherwise obscure. These disadvantages had been partly, though by no means wholly, overcome; some of them were with him to the end.

Disraeli the Novelist

It was by determination and industry, under the spur of ambition, and with the aid of unusual natural gifts and the possession of an imagination as strange as it was remarkable, that Disraeli had made himself famous in both politics and letters. As a novelist he had already won distinction in a field peculiarly his own: his best pages glitter with epigrams and sparkle with ideas; and *Sybil* at least shows that he had an understanding of social problems which was foreign to his great political rivals. True, he often shocked and puzzled his contemporaries; he flouted English taste, as he trifled with English grammar—he had never more than an imperfect conception of the difference between a transitive and an intransitive verb; and the fragments of autobiography scattered up and down his novels were often taken, not with entire fairness, to confirm the prevailing notion that he was a mere adventurer. But the impression sprang in the first place from the apparent contradictions of his first essays in politics. With scant success he had tried to enter parliament first as a Radical, then as a Tory, for he was always consistent in his hatred of Whiggism. Not till 1837 had he found a seat. He was then returned for Maidstone by the influence of Mr. Wyndham Lewis.*

Disraeli's first parliamentary efforts had been disappointing, but he had gradually acquired the ear of the house. Though he had lived down the notion that he was a fool or a fop, he had not obtained the confidence of his fellow-members, and, in spite of his great abilities and his skill in debate, Disraeli was still, in 1846, when he had reached his forty-second year, not merely out of office, but ignored by the Tory leaders.

* Mr. Lewis died in 1838, and in 1839 Disraeli married his widow.



BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, AS DEPICTED IN "PUNCH," 1844-82

From Cartoons by Richard Doyle, John Leech, John Tenniel, Charles Keene, and Linley Sambourne—redrawn by Harry Furniss.

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For two sessions he had been drifting more and more into opposition, as the advocate of those opinions which Peel, chosen to defend, had in office abandoned, and as the spokesman of the malcontent Tories, who delighted in his gibes and cheered his sallies when he taunted ministers or sneered at Peel.

The Corn and Customs Bill gave Disraeli his opportunity. He said what the country

county prohibits the import of able men from other counties. This is why eloquent sceptics—Bolingbroke and Disraeli—have been apt to lead the unseceptical Tories. They will have people with a great piece of land in a particular spot, and of course those people generally cannot speak and often cannot think. And so eloquent men who laugh at the party come to lead them."

provena foto
Jan. 20. 1849
My dear Sarah.

*I am sent for again
about the great
business, & I arrived
here this afternoon.*

*I don't know what
will happen - but
am inclined to think
that the office will
be mine, tho' I*

*is an awful
responsibility -*

*Bamford & Miles have
written to Stanley their
opinion, that I should be
the man. There is
a meeting to day in town
of some of the notables.
But I don't think the
question*

LETTER FROM DISRAELI TO HIS SISTER SARAH, 1849

This letter anticipates his leadership of the Conservative party.

From the original in the British Museum (Add. MS. 36878, ff. 68, 69b).

squire thought but could not say so well; he did more—he gave the rural members confidence in their own opinions when they were beginning to think them difficult to defend. The weakness of the territorial party in English politics has been explained by Bagehot in a famous passage of his *English Constitution*: "The counties not only elect landowners, which is natural and perhaps wise, but also elect landowners of their own county, which is absurd. There is no free trade in the agricultural mind: each

There is in this some humorous exaggeration, though the pages of Anthony Trollope also attest the truth of Bagehot's description of the electoral habits of the county gentlemen. In 1846 the squires became furious, but at first they were dumb. Then Bentinck and Disraeli sounded the horn of opposition, and encouraged by their speeches, as well as by their exhortations, even the dumb found tongue. Disraeli's *Life of Bentinck* shows how diligently they rallied the back-benchers and encouraged them to

DISRAELI AND THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

speaking, supplied them with ammunition, and directed their attacks. And Disraeli said for them the things that they dare not or could not say. They felt for him the awed admiration of timid schoolboys for some horny-handed playmate who was prepared to take the lead in all the mischief and risk all the consequences.

To cheer a man is one thing : to give him

question can be
definitely attested
for a brief ones

Tell Jew, for I am
too proud to write to
tell you that the
real amount of the
Brentford rent left
the income tax &c.
will send you a
cheque to pay him
I

mysterious manner, which has much of the foreigner about it, and are incapable of understanding and appreciating the great abilities which certainly underlie and, as it were, are concealed by this mask."

It must be remembered also that the Conservative party was socially exclusive; it represented a caste as well as a special interest, the land. Disraeli had no per-

from having seen people,
I am too excited at
this moment to write
day length - but
will communicate
occasionally.

Yours affly
D

May that Peel will
never deliver my
apartment

implicit confidence as a leader is another. Both Bentinck and Disraeli soon found that their following was both fractious and factional. In 1848, feeling like a caged wild bird escaped from his wired prison, Bentinck resigned the leadership because his party was dissatisfied on account of the support he had given to a bill which would have admitted Jews to the Commons. The party does not seem to have given even a thought to Disraeli as a possible successor. "There can be no doubt that there is a very strong feeling among Conservatives in the House of Commons against him," his future colleague, Malmesbury, records in his diary. "They are puzzled and alarmed by his

sonal share in that special interest, and he was outside the caste. Nothing is more surprising than to find, from his own letters, how many of the great landed proprietors on his own side were strangers to him, save, perhaps, in the way of political business, until after he had stepped forward as the champion of their interests in 1846, when he began to enter many of the great Tory houses for the first time. Bentinck was one of themselves, but Disraeli was an intruder, and the process of social adoption was slow. If the Tories would not stand by Bentinck, they were still less likely to stand by Disraeli, who had not merely supported the Jew Bill, but had supported it

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on principles which they either could not understand or thought worse than the bill itself, and who was, moreover, himself one of the hated race. "Confidence," Chatham had once said, "is a plant of slow growth." In this case it had to grow slowly in a soil in many ways unfavourable to its development. Bentinck and others were indignant at the want of gratitude which the squires displayed towards Disraeli after the first paroxysm of anger against Peel for his betrayal of their interests had passed off, and Bentinck told his friend Stanley, who was slow in conquering an early dislike to Disraeli, that this could not have been possible if Stanley himself had "played a generous part."

Position of the Whigs

It was perhaps fortunate for the party that no successor to Bentinck could be found.* For some time the group was without an official leader. Though they did not realize it at the time, the Protectionists, by their failure to choose a leader who would accept the post, had in fact chosen Disraeli, for he was without dispute their foremost spokesman, the man on whom they were obliged to depend in every crisis, as in an earlier day they had been forced to lean on Peel. The vacancy in the leadership allowed time for confidence to grow, and in the end the Protectionists awakened to the fact that, whether they willed it or no, the despised intruder was their master and their chief.

Outwardly the Whigs were the most homogeneous of the great parties. But the reality did not correspond to the appearance. "The condition of the Whig party" on the eve of Peel's fall, says Disraeli, "was absolutely forlorn; it was spoken of as a corpse; it was treated as a phantom." But the Tory split had raised the corpse, and the party was no phantom, though its outward unity was a deception which the more acute of its opponents had no difficulty in penetrating. The difficulties of the Whigs arose from the fact that in the Whig Brentford

there were two kings to trouble its peace. Palmerston and Russell were "bidders together at an auction of popularity" within their own party, and their differences of temperament and opinion were becoming strongly marked. At the crisis of the Corn Law dispute Palmerston introduced into a free-trade speech a parenthesis in favour of a small fixed duty on corn, a policy cast aside by his party, which looked like a bid, at that moment of confusion, for the leadership of a middle party of moderate Protectionists, recruited from the Whigs who disliked free trade in corn, of whom there were many, and the Tories who were in revolt against Peel. And Palmerston was in part responsible for Russell's failure to form a ministry in 1845, when he refused to join the cabinet unless he were given the foreign office. Now, Palmerston and Russell were by far the ablest of the Whig leaders: each was, as the event proved, to serve in a cabinet presided over by the other; each represented a distinct strain in Whiggism; and each, in gifts and experience, supplied something that the other lacked. It was disastrous for the party that these complementary forces, each useful and even necessary, weakened each other by opposition instead of aiding each other by union.

Lord John Russell

Russell was in many ways the inferior of Peel as a statesman and as a leader of the Commons. He sometimes missed the true inwardness of a parliamentary situation; he lost touch with his followers and with the house; he never learnt, as Peel did, to play on the House of Commons "like an old violin"; in thinking of the policy that beseeemed a Russell he was prone to forget the policy which would best answer to the country's need; and his mind was apt to move on an academic and theoretical plane remote from the thoughts of the ordinary run of mankind. Yet he had many great qualities: tenacity, such as he had shown in the battles for reform and continued to display in his efforts to remove the political disabilities of the Jews; the rare gift of parliamentary courage, as great when he was fighting a losing battle in opposition as

* Bentinck died suddenly on September 21st, 1848. In practice he had continued to lead even after his abdication.

COBDEN ON LORD JOHN RUSSELL

when he was first minister of the Crown ; a keen appreciation of constitutional problems which drew out his highest powers, and which he handled with a firmness and integrity seldom equalled. Cobden once drew a portrait of Russell which brings out with

Peel. He breathes the atmosphere of a privileged clique. . . . He is sometimes thinking of the house of Russell whilst Peel is occupied upon Manchester."

Russell's friends as well as his political critics complained that he relied too much

THE RUSSELL FAMILY

John Russell,¹
first Earl of Bedford
d. 1554

Francis, second Earl
d. 1585

Francis

William, Baron Russell *
d. 1613

Edward, third Earl
d. 1627

Francis, fourth Earl
d. 1641

William, first Duke of Bedford
d. 1700

Edward,

Lord William Russell² = Rachel Wriothesley
executed 1683

Admiral Edward Russell,
Earl of Orford
d. 1697

Wriothesley, second Duke

Wriothesley, third Duke
d. 1732

John, fourth Duke *
d. 1771

Francis

Francis, fifth Duke
d. 1802

John, sixth Duke
d. 1839

Francis, seventh Duke
d. 1861

Lord George Russell

Lord John Russell,
Prime Minister
1846-52, 1865-6,
created Earl Russell
1861

Lord C. J. Fox Russell
Rt. Hon. G. W. E.
Russell
d. 1919

William,
eighth Duke
d. 1872

Francis, ninth Duke
d. 1891

Odo,
created Baron
Amphill
1881

John
d. 1876

Arthur, second
Lord Amphill
b. 1869

George,
tenth Duke
d. 1893

Herbrand,
eleventh Duke
b. 1858

Francis,
second Earl Russell
b. 1865

Hon. Bertrand
Russell
b. 1872

¹ Favourite of Henry VIII.

² Lord Deputy of Ireland.

³ Condemned for alleged complicity in the Rye House Plot.

* Leader of a Whig faction known as the "Bloomsbury Gang."

great skill his virtues and his defects. "The Whig leader," he said, "is great upon questions of a constitutional character, and has an hereditary leaning towards a popular and liberal interpretation of the Constitution. But his mind is less adapted (than Peel's) for the mastery of economical questions, and he attaches an inferior importance to them. Nor does he weigh the forces of public opinion so accurately as

on the advice of his family circle. He knew too little of the thoughts of other men and other men knew too little of his whilst his opinions were in the formative stage—the latter a fault which Peel shared with him. The result was that some of his judgments, brooded over in private, appeared spasmodic when they became known. Not the public only, but his colleagues were apt to be taken by surprise. This must occasionally happen

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in the careers of all public men. But others have been more skilful in leading supporters to think that they have long expected what has really surprised them, and a convenient vanity has eased the way to the acceptance of a new policy. Though John Russell was innocent of such arts, his power and reputation as a statesman had, in spite of set-

moment when he committed it in his Edinburgh letter, on his own responsibility, to the repeal of the Corn Law, and thereby made certain the doom of protection in corn.

Palmerston was a man of another type. In domestic affairs he was temperamentally a Conservative. He disliked parliamentary reform, and though he supported the Reform



THE RAILWAY JUGGERNAUT

In 1847 (two years after the publication of this cartoon) there was a financial panic, caused mainly by excessive speculation during the "railway boom."

From the "Punch" Cartoon of July 26th, 1845, by permission of the Proprietors.

backs, markedly increased throughout a long career. Between 1835 and 1841, when his party had been fighting an undignified and, on the whole, a losing battle, his prestige had steadily increased. In the five years of economic reconstruction which followed—years dominated by problems at which he did not excel—it is doubtful whether any other man could have led the opposition with greater skill and fewer blunders. And at the worst Russell had generally been greater than his party, not least at the

Bill he was anxious that it should be as moderate as possible and that it should never be extended. At heart he was probably an agricultural protectionist and a commercial free-trader, in which, perhaps, he did not differ much from other landlords—for it is not in human nature to avoid sighing for the advantages of two logically opposed policies. But Palmerston remained essentially what he had become at the most stimulating moment of his life—a Canningite. In foreign affairs he was genuinely interested,

WEAKNESS OF THE WHIG GOVERNMENT

and he could make them interesting to others as few British statesmen have ever been able to do. He liked to pose as the friend of oppressed nationalities, to assert himself in John Bullish fashion in the councils of Europe, and so to combine, agreeably to himself, the virtues of the philanthropist—at some one else's expense—with the habits of the bully—of which the full enjoyment was reserved for himself.

Palmerston played on many critical occasions a great and noble part in European affairs. On others he acted ignobly and even meanly. He had none of Russell's love for constitutional principle, though he used it when it pleased him, and by ignoring it he suffered his greatest fall. But he had a far keener sense of national opinion, and a closer touch with common human feelings than it was in Russell to acquire. He had, too, a breezy vigour and confidence, which, though really deceptive, infected others and appealed to the general public. If Palmerston was neither more energetic nor more efficient than his rivals, yet the time came when he succeeded in making the nation think that he was; and this was the secret of his popularity and power.

Russell as Prime Minister

The fall of Peel brought the Whigs back into power. But their power was held on a curious tenure. They had not a majority. The Peelites wished to keep them in office in order to keep the Protectionists out; and the Protectionists were so anxious to prevent Peel from slipping in again that they were determined to do nothing which might make it possible for him to displace the Whigs. The Whigs were, therefore, very much in the position of caretakers, always liable to be turned out by a new tenant, but never certain as to the tenant who would claim possession. It was an unhealthy condition of affairs, and not one which helped the Whigs to make of themselves their rather modest best.

Lord John Russell became prime minister, but he did nothing to strengthen his position by his choice of a cabinet. Nothing illustrates more forcibly one of the congenital defects of Whiggism than his neglect

of such a glorious opportunity to freshen its official ranks. He did try to get the support of some of the younger Peelites—Lincoln, Dalhousie and Sidney Herbert—but they refused to join him and could scarcely do otherwise than decline to serve under a minister who had climbed to office by means of the rather factious vote that had turned them out, even if the offer had not seemed like a somewhat barefaced attempt to separate them from their own friends. Russell, consequently, selected his ministers from the old Whig cliques and family groups. Once more there was a cabinet composed mainly of Irish or English peers and of the heirs or relatives of peers.* There was no real attempt to Liberalize it, or even to infuse into it new blood by the traditional process of "extracting the brains from below the gangway." The sole concession to the men whose activities, by making possible the repeal of the Corn Law, had been the means of opening the path of the ministry to office was that the vice-presidency of the board of trade was given to the least interesting of the Cobdenites, Milner Gibson.

Whigs and Finance

The rule of the Whigs was as feeble as of old. Misfortune dogged their financial measures. In 1847 (when there was a financial panic caused mainly by excessive speculation during the railway boom) they lost the confidence of the City by their long delay in suspending the Bank Charter Act. Possibly they were right (Peel, at least, agreed with them) and their critics wrong. Round the Bank Charter Act "fanatics lit their camp fires for thirty years," and the agitation may have been inspired by Peel's act as much as by Whig dalliance. Ministers not only lost support in one quarter by the obstinacy with which they refused to suspend the act—they were blamed in the opposite quarter for giving way to clamour when they did yield. Their budgets were not more fortunate than those of the Melbourne ministry. The budget of 1848, as if to

* Macaulay was a prominent exception, but he lost his seat at the general election of 1847, and retired to write his *History*.

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point the contrast between the Whigs and the Peelites, went through four editions before it was passed.

Reduction of the Sugar Duties

Amid the denunciations of the Protectionists, ministers persevered in the Free-Trade policy inaugurated by Peel. In 1846, when they made a substantial reduction in the sugar duties, they were promptly assailed from more than one side. Sugar indeed threatened to be as unfortunate a subject for them as it had been for Whig governments in the past, for it aroused both the fury of the Protectionists and the prejudices of "the Saints," since it was closely connected with the question of slavery. A heavy preference had been given to West Indian sugar, but West Indian sugar could not supply the full demand of the British market. Duties on foreign sugar grown without slave labour had been already much reduced, though even in that case a small preference had been preserved for the West Indian grower. As the bulk of the available foreign sugar was slave-grown the market was not much enlarged by the change.

It was now proposed to treat all foreign sugar alike, to reduce the preference on colonial sugar at once by making the duty on foreign sugar only 50 per cent. greater than on the colonial article, and by gradual stages to reduce it still further until in five years the preference would altogether disappear. These changes would, it was held, increase the consumption of a necessary article of diet by placing it, in ample quantities, within reach of the poorer classes at such prices as they could afford, and at the same time benefit the exchequer by increasing the total revenue from the duties.

These contentions were borne out by experience. On the testimony of an opponent of the change, the reduction of duty resulted in an advantage to the consumer of two and a half million pounds, and the increased consumption sent up the revenue by £400,000 a year. But it so happened that slave-grown sugar was much cheaper than West Indian sugar; for generations the colonial planter had enjoyed a monopoly of the British market which had deprived

him of all incentive to exert himself or to improve his methods; he was unready to meet competitors in an open market. And the Protectionists came to his support. They charged ministers with trying to get rid of a vexed question while the opposition was disunited.

"It had," said Disraeli, "been embarrassing, if not fatal, to many governments. Strange that a manufacture which charms infancy and soothes old age should so frequently occasion political disaster. The minister, therefore, was resolved to rid himself of this perpetual difficulty by precipitating a settlement while the elements of opposition on this question, though powerful, were distracted." It was urged that, having deprived the colonial growers of the successful means of competition by the abolition of slavery, we were "at least bound to secure them a home market." The survivors of the anti-slavery party, less careful perhaps of West Indian interests, were still averse to making a present of a promising market to foreign slave-owners, and they joined with the Protectionists in opposing the measure, lest it should appear that, having abolished slavery in the colonies, we were encouraging it elsewhere. The ministry was in danger, and Peel, disapproving of its proposals, yet unwilling to see it overthrown, saved it from the storm. The new scale of duties was carried and proved of great advantage to the British consumer, though it would be uncandid to conceal the fact that in the opinion of many people it was disastrous to the West Indies.

Repeal of the Navigation Acts

In 1849 the ministry proposed a measure, described by Graham as "the capital necessary to crown the work we have already accomplished," the repeal of the Navigation Acts. Whatever view may be taken of their value in earlier times, few would now be found to argue that they had not in 1849 outlived their usefulness. They were, indeed, a disadvantage to colonial trade, particularly in the case of Canada, and they led, in practice, to enforced wastefulness in freightage, which raised prices in the British market without anyone being a penny the

DISRAELI AND PROTECTION

better for it. Free trade without free ships made the Acts of Navigation seem an anachronism, and the struggle against their repeal was really a rearguard action between Protectionists and Free Traders. Stanley on the one side and Graham on the other were at pains to make this clear. The case for retaining the acts depended on the belief that Protection would be restored; the case against them was that their repeal would confirm the Free-Trade victory. The measure passed the Commons without serious difficulty. In the Lords it was otherwise, and there but for the help of Peel and Wellington the ministry would have been beaten. When the repeal was at last carried, it was only by small majorities; and in this instance the ministry might justly have claimed that it had been the means of completing Peel's work.

As time wore on, the Protectionists began to shift their ground. A few of them, like Stanley, clung to their old policy, but Disraeli, more astute than his chief, did not want to fight the battle anew on the field of old defeats. Bentinck and Stanley might think that the repeal of the Corn Law had been carried by a trick, in defiance of public opinion; Disraeli knew better. On the eve of the general election of 1847 he had publicly declared that he was not "one of those who would counsel, or who would abet, any attempt factiously and forcibly to repeal the measures of 1846." They required "an ample experiment"; "this test alone can satisfy the nation either of their expediency, or their want of fitness." "You have become united to Free Trade, and nothing can divorce you except," he told the electors of Bucks, "you can prove the charmer false." To optimistic Protectionists, who may genuinely have believed that the country was with them, the election was a disappointment. The country was little excited, but if it pronounced any verdict on the conduct of Peel, that verdict showed gratitude rather than indignation. Prominent leaguers

and Peelites were returned for important constituencies, and instead of disappearing, as the Protectionists had hoped, the Peelites returned a hundred and five strong. While the Whigs had a substantial majority over the Protectionists, they had not an absolute majority of the whole house, so that, to the disgust of the Protectionists, the last



DISRAELI AS "THE POLITICAL Topsy"

"I 'spects nobody can't do nothin' with me" (vide "Uncle Tom's Cabin").

From the "Punch" Cartoon of October 23rd, 1852, by permission of the Proprietors.

word lay with the hated Peelites, who were in a position to turn the scale as they wished.

"The great question of Protection," said Disraeli after the election, "is not dead, but is only sleeping." He was already thinking of a bridge over which his party might retreat, the plan of compensations to the landed interest instead of the restoration of the Corn Law. He was not too eager for the awakening of Protection until it had changed somewhat in its sleep.



GREAT COURTYARD, DUBLIN CASTLE, 1829

From the Engraving in the British Museum (10390, dd. 3, 18) by E. Goodall, after the Painting by George Petrie, R.H.A.

CHAPTER XIII

CONDITIONS IN IRELAND AND THE COLLAPSE OF CHARTISM (1847-8)

IRELAND, the proximate though not the fundamental cause of the repeal of the Corn Laws, was not saved from the miseries of famine by all the well-meant, but often blundering, efforts of the English ministry. Anticipations of the ruinous effect of the potato blight at the end of 1845 were happily to some extent falsified; it was serious, but not quite so serious as had been feared. Unhappily the blight spread with greater suddenness and still more devastating effect in the next season. Relief works, hastily improvised and not very well conceived, had to be paid for at enormous cost out of the British exchequer. It is easy to criticize what was done, and not so easy, without intellectual hypocrisy, to say how it ought to have been done better; for even to-day governments have not solved the problem of providing for vast armies of men

suddenly deprived of the means of livelihood through forces largely beyond their own control. Society cannot see them starve; though it has not devised the means of helping them, and of avoiding, at the same time, the risks of their moral and physical deterioration, or of economic evils which may retard their restoration to an independent means of livelihood.

Broadly, all proposed schemes of relief work resolve themselves into the organization of public enterprises requiring the roughest kind of unskilled labour, and generally, by one device or another—whether by short time, or a low rate of pay, or by a combination of both—into the provision of something less than an adequate maintenance. Unskilled labour of an unaccustomed kind is dear labour, even when paid for at a low rate, and inadequate maintenance is

IRISH DISTRESS AND TROUBLES

costly in manhood. Both are, in the long run, expensive to the State. Now, Ireland suffered from inadequate means of communication, and it is in developing means of communication that the greatest amount of unskilled labour can most readily be absorbed. If a wise and comprehensive scheme had been adopted and persevered with, Ireland might have reaped a permanent advantage from the relief works, though such a scheme would not have been cheap. Bentinck urged that the opportunity should be taken for the development of Ireland by a well-considered scheme of improvement which would provide it with roads and railways and give promise of future economic benefit. A loan to three Irish railways was all that was done in this direction, though much money was spent upon roads, mostly ill-planned. Men still speak of derelict roads in Ireland, begun during this period and afterwards abandoned, which run nowhere in particular and sometimes end in a bog. And it was upon the roads that money provided for the relief of the victims of famine was mainly spent.

Mismanagement of Irish Relief

The Irish peasantry was helped but pauperized, and the possible public advantages were lost by bad management. All the skill and administrative experience which men like Peel and Graham and Lord Dalhousie might have brought to the solution of such a problem were sorely missed, for in the first half of the century the Whigs were very seldom happy in their management of a problem plainly administrative in character. Disraeli and Peel were agreed in believing that the business had been mismanaged. Disraeli spoke indignantly of "a nation breaking stones upon the road." Peel, in a private letter to Hardinge, written in February, 1847, laid a more formidable, if less picturesque, indictment against the ministry. "When I tell you that there are at this moment five hundred thousand men in Ireland receiving daily wages from government for doing worse than nothing, superintended by a staff of eleven thousand engineers, pay-clerks and so forth, hastily selected, I need say nothing more to you,

who have been in Ireland, to impress you with the magnitude of the evil." The cost to the exchequer was enormous; a sum of £8,000,000 had to be borrowed in 1847 alone to finance these relief schemes, and the interest on this sum, when added to the increased cost of temporary government borrowing which followed so large an addition to the debt, caused an increase of over £400,000 a year to our annual charges. To a generation accustomed to think in millions this may seem trivial; it was no light burden in days when our annual budget was about fifty-two millions, and was, at that, regarded as too heavy for the nation.

Agrarian Troubles in Ireland

Unhappily, all this expenditure did not suffice to assuage the ills of Ireland. Agrarian discontents arising from the system of tenure which obtained throughout the greater part of the country produced something approaching a land war. Peel's efforts to provide security for the tenant and compensation for improvements, though based on the report of a commission of landlords, had been thwarted by the House of Lords; and where Peel had failed the Whigs could scarcely hope to succeed. The lack of any legal remedy against arbitrary evictions, or any protection of the tenant against the greed of a landlord anxious to let an improved holding to a new occupier on terms more profitable to himself, led to agitation and violence; and the passing of a new Coercion Act in 1847, to repress the violence which tenant-wrong provoked, made Ireland peculiarly liable to seize upon any means of showing its deep resentment against what seemed to the small cultivator a partial and unfair principle of legislation. That many horrible crimes took place is undeniable, and drastic remedies were needed, but no party in parliament can be held entirely guiltless of dealing with the symptoms before attacking the causes of disease.

Thus the ground was prepared in the usual way for the agitator. Amid its agrarian discontents Ireland was peculiarly liable to squalls of political excitement. A group

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of young politicians, some of them very able men who were to show statesmanship of no mean order in later life, began an agitation of their own, largely independent of the older school of O'Connellism, for the rights of repressed nationality. They owed, perhaps, something to the inspiration of Lamartine, at that time preparing the way, whether consciously or not, for the republican movement of 1848 in France. They certainly had



WILLIAM SMITH O'BRIEN

From a Miniature in the possession of D. O'Brien, Esq.

at first a distinctive Irish policy, a union of hearts, after the manner of the coalition of men of different parties and religions which the United Irishmen had brought about in their early days.

The "Young Ireland" party of 1848 was an organism in which the tail wagged the body, and to many in the party tail-wagging meant physical force. Its "led leader" was a weak and amiable member of parliament named Smith O'Brien, son of Lord Inchiquin and a close connexion by marriage of Lord Malmesbury, Disraeli's future colleague. O'Brien was suspected of seeking aid from France; when he attempted to defend himself against the charge in the Commons he said, "I have been called a traitor," and the shouts of the noisier mem-

bers of the house showed that they thought him one. The ministry itself was alarmed, and asked for fresh measures of coercion. O'Brien took it that these measures, coupled with the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, were aimed at him. Collecting a few followers, he fled from arrest. Ultimately, at Ballingarry, in Tipperary, there occurred a slight brush between his little body-guard and the police. Fifty policemen were sufficient to disperse the rebels—if so tiny an affray can be called a rebellion—and shortly afterwards O'Brien was arrested. He was convicted of treason, recommended to mercy by the jury, and transported instead of being hanged; six years later he was released on condition that he did not return to Ireland, and in 1856 he was granted a free pardon.

But while this parody of a rebellion ended in something very near to farce, the discontents which made it possible were very real. Thousands of Irishmen, losing all hope at home, emigrated to the United States or to the colonies; thousands more remained at home only to perish of want. By death or emigration the population of Ireland was reduced by over a million and a half in the decade of which the famine was the central point; between 1841 and 1881 it fell a trifle more than three millions; the toll of the famine and of misgovernment was, therefore, levied in manhood. It is not much matter for wonder that when Lord Palmerston lectured Austria or Spain about freedom and reform their ministers retorted by pointing a retaliatory finger at Ireland.

In 1848 the tremors of revolution were manifest throughout Europe, and in one sense O'Brien's rising was only a local symptom of the general fever. In England the prevailing excitement showed itself in a recrudescence of Chartism. The previous year had been one of economic distress and financial disaster in England as well as Ireland. As before, the distress fostered Chartism and gave to Feargus O'Connor a fresh though temporary lease of life. Chartist candidates, though successful only at Nottingham, where O'Connor was elected, had none the less polled surprisingly well in some constituencies during

REVIVAL OF CHARTISM

the general election. The O'Connorites were accordingly encouraged to try a new convention and a new petition. The petition was prepared and signed by many thousands of persons, and a monster meeting on Kennington Common was called for April 10, 1848, in order to form a great procession and bear the petition to parliament in

turbance was ever formidable, for none took place, and there was not even a procession. When the meeting assembled at Kennington it mustered nearer thirty thousand than the half million of the Chartist boasts and the quiet householder's fears. O'Connor, who well knew that it was illegal to present a petition in force, was persuaded by a police



CHARTIST DEMONSTRATION ON KENNINGTON COMMON, 1848

From a contemporary Print.

triumph. The public was alarmed. In the disturbed state of Europe fears of violence were not unnatural. The Duke of Wellington was called into council by ministers, London was put into a state of siege, and troops were in readiness if required, though the duke, well knowing that nothing was better calculated to provoke violence than the sight of a scarlet tunic, was careful to conceal his forces as thoroughly as possible. The only obvious signs of preparation to resist a rising or quell a riot were the patrols of special constables that were enlisted for the occasion.

It is hard to tell whether the risk of a dis-

officer that if any disturbance took place he would be held personally responsible, and was told that in no case would the procession be allowed to cross any of the bridges. O'Connor seems to have been terrified by the spectre of his own raising. He advised the meeting to disperse quietly. According to the account of one member of the House of Lords, who had been frightened enough to bring his five gamekeepers up to town armed with double-barrelled guns for the defence of his residence, O'Connor even told his hearers more than once that they were fools. After listening to a number of speeches the Chartists went back to their

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homes, for the most part quietly, and the dreaded tenth of April ended with nothing more serious than a few broken heads—the normal aftermath of any day of excitement.

ing Mr. Punch's, and infantile *jeux d'esprit*, such as "Victoria Rex, April 1st." There were fewer than two million signatures, a smaller number than in 1842, and even these were eked out by seventeen bogus autographs

of the Duke of Wellington. Whole pages were in some instances in the same handwriting, no doubt that of some clerk who had imagined himself to be assisting the cause of liberty by employing a few leisure moments in this unfortunate means of augmenting the roll of names. Chartism had come in as a tragedy of want, of suffering, of stifled political energies and of thwarted manhood; it went out as a farce amid shouts of merriment, doing little honour to the sincerity and modesty of the original Chartists, or to the real earnestness of many thousands of honest men in the rank and file. Chartism, as Chartism, was dead, but its spirit still lived on to give power to the popular movement for household suffrage, or to Lovett's efforts for the edu-



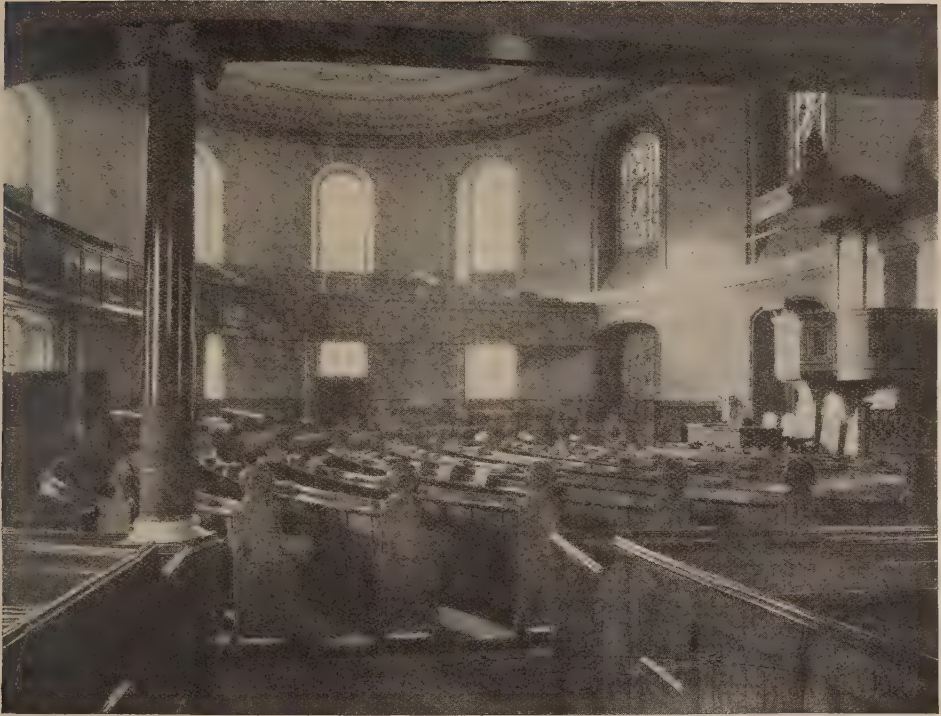
"NOT SO VERY UNREASONABLE! EH?"

John (Lord John Russell): "My mistress says she hopes you won't call a meeting of her creditors; but if you will leave your Bill in the usual way, it shall be properly attended to."

From the "Punch" Cartoon of April 15th, 1848, by permission of the Proprietors.

The petition was taken to the Commons in three cabs, and was presented amid shouts of laughter. When referred to the committee on petitions in the normal course, it was found to be full of faked signatures, includ-

cation of his fellows, or to Holyoake's advocacy of co-operation, or to many another effort towards political or social betterment without which our modern world would have been different and the poorer.



SCENE OF THE DISRUPTION: ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH

From a Photograph by W. and E. Drummond Young, Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XIV

CHURCH QUESTIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY (1850-2)

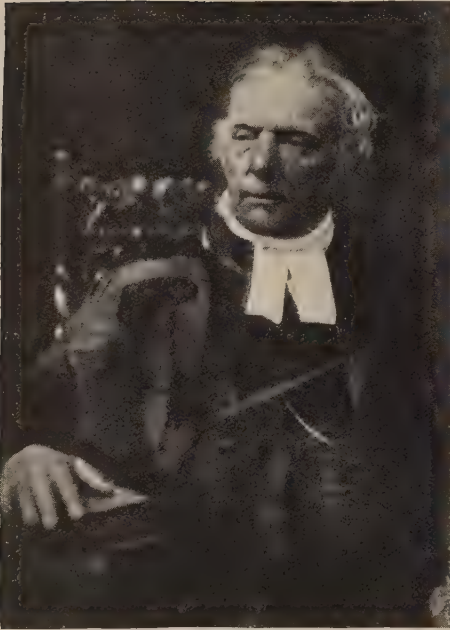
IN 1851 Russell had to face a religious instead of a political storm, and got into a serious scrape, largely of his own creating, in regard to what was called "papal aggression." Many causes, however, had contributed to the state of public feeling which made possible a new ebullition of anti-Catholic prejudice.

When the century opened, the majority of the English clergy, so far as they were troubled by questions of theology or liturgy, were probably what would now be called Low Churchmen; and few were irked by lay control, whether of the patron or of the State. But in the 'thirties and the 'forties a new uneasiness began to show itself in

regard to the true interpretation of the position of the English Church, to the conduct of its worship, and to the dangers of parliamentary control; while in the Kirk of Scotland the dominance of the lay patron was challenged, and a demand was put forward for "spiritual independence." In the deepest sense the two movements were akin; both were protests against the prevailing habit of regarding the cure of souls as a matter of business, even of property, and not as a spiritual calling, though in dogma they were poles asunder, and they ran entirely different courses.

In Scotland, Dr. Chalmers led a revolt against lay patronage and championed the

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THOMAS CHALMERS

From a Photograph by D. O. Hill, R.S.A.

right of parishioners to reject the nominee of a lay patron if he were a minister whom they did think likely to satisfy their spiritual wants. Chalmers was defeated in point of law, and failed to persuade the Peel ministry to confer a right of veto upon the congregations by a legislative change. In consequence, on May 20th, 1843, four hundred and seventy-four ministers of the Established Kirk threw up their benefices and founded the Free Kirk of Scotland. The seceding ministers and their followers, who voluntarily renounced all claim to the endowments of the Established Kirk, bought their freedom and established their sincerity—the ministers by exchanging an assured livelihood for an uncertain one, and their flocks by raising a million and a quarter of money and building six hundred and fifty churches within four years.

In England the form of the revolt was different, though it, too, was a groping after liberty, a striving to purge the Church from the Erastianism which threatened it from within, and to protect it from the Eras-

tianism without, and at the same time to defend it from the politicians and men of science, to save it from attempts to challenge its authority or undermine its faith. Most men were convinced that the Church was in danger, though different men saw the danger in varying guises, and put forward contradictory remedies. Dr. Arnold of Rugby wished to make the Church national by making it comprehensive; but his views could hardly have gained general acceptance save in a world full of Arnolds.

From Oriel, the centre of progressive Oxford, there emerged another prophet in John Henry Newman, to gather about him a band of disciples and attempt to prop tottering orthodoxy and a menaced Church by *Tracts for the Times*. These Oxford reformers sought something "deeper and truer than satisfied the last century," that age of reason in which life had ebbed from the Church. They looked for nothing new, but turned back to the older tradition which the eighteenth century had obscured. They insisted on the continuity of the Established Church of England with the pre-Reformation Church in England, and upon their



THOMAS ARNOLD

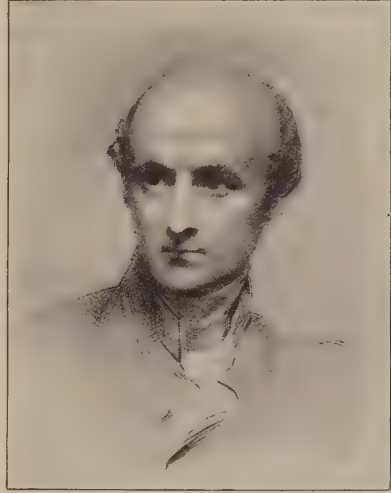
From the Painting by Thomas Phillips, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

right to anything that it might have inherited; they exalted the authority of the Church as the depository of the accumulated tradition of the Christian faith, and taught that the Church had something to offer, on that account, beyond what the Bible alone could give; and closely, if not inseparably, allied with this was their emphasis upon the sacrificial office of the priesthood, and the stress which they laid upon the efficacy of the sacraments, above all of the Eucharist. Like Arnold, whom they attacked, they stood for a broad interpretation of the articles. They called themselves "Catholic." One of them called himself "a Catholic without the popery and a Church of England man without the Protestantism." He wanted, in fact, such an interpretation of the articles as would allow him to be Catholic in doctrine without being papal in allegiance.

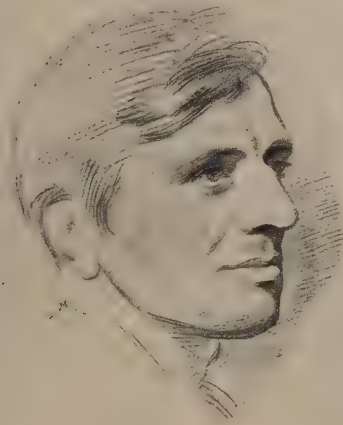
This was perhaps to put the case in a more extreme form than would at first have been acceptable to the majority even

of the Oxford men. It was a statement which was bound to excite prejudice. But there was much in the views of Newman



ARCHDEACON (AFTERWARDS CARDINAL)
MANNING

From an Engraving after the Drawing by George Richmond, R.A.



JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

From the Chalk Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

and his associates which met with general sympathy: their care for the seemliness of worship, their genuine devotion, of which Keble's *Christian Year* is one permanent expression, with their dislike of the worldly parson, and their insistence on the philanthropic mission of the parish priest.

Some date the Oxford Movement from the appearance of the *Christian Year* in 1827, some like Newman from Keble's assize sermon on National Apostasy in July, 1833. But it was to the *Tracts for the Times* that it owed its first fame and influence; they were widely distributed and for a time they were of great effect. But as they went on the "Catholic" note became louder, and the sound of answering protests was heard. The protests broke into a positive storm on the appearance of *Tract Ninety*, written by Newman, on the Church of England as the *via media*, a plea for a generous interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles, designed to show that they could honestly be subscribed by a man holding most of the doctrines of Rome. To one owing allegi-

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ance neither to Rome nor to Canterbury, and necessarily viewing the controversy from the outside, it might well appear that Newman had at least as good a case as his more extreme opponents. But *Tract Ninety* was condemned by the heads of the Oxford colleges, and at the request of the Bishop of Oxford the *Tracts* were dis-



CARDINAL WISEMAN

From the Painting by Thomas Briscoe, at Ushaw College.

continued. The tide of opposition was now in full flood, reinforced by those who, on political as well as religious grounds, had opposed Catholic emancipation.

Newman bowed before the Oxford decision of 1841, but it made him uneasy. His great soul, after struggling during four more years to find rest in the English Church, at last found a refuge, in 1845, in the fold of Rome. The cost was heavy. To many, even among the Tractarians, his secession came as a blow. It meant a breach with old and tried friends. Not only was it a shock to many admirers of his mind and spirit; it also embittered the struggle between the

Tractarians and the Low Church, or Evangelical, party in the Church of England. Many opponents now saw, or thought they saw, that Tractarianism had from the beginning been a deep-laid plot to Romanize the English Church. Disciples less discreet than the first Tractarians exasperated rather than abated the acrimony of the contest, and were at scant pains to show tenderness towards the wounded feelings of men whose convictions were as honest as their own. Newman was followed by many others in his pilgrimage to Rome, and in April, 1851, the Church of England suffered a second blow by the secession of Archdeacon Manning.

Prejudice had already been stirred to boiling-point before the news of Manning's secession. The Papacy, possibly misled by the greater liberality of English legislation affecting Roman Catholics, almost certainly encouraged by the recent conversions, and perhaps laying too much stress on the Catholic leanings of the Tractarians—who did not, as a body, falter in their loyalty to the English Church as they interpreted its meaning and mission—thought the prospects of Roman Catholicism in England much better than they actually were, and made the blunder of underrating the strength of the hostility in this country towards Rome. England, in fine, had acquired a greater reputation at Rome for toleration than she altogether deserved. In the autumn of 1850 the Papacy set up an episcopal organization in England, under the direction of Cardinal Wiseman, and divided the country into dioceses under bishops bearing the names of English towns. There was at once a fierce outcry. Russell himself gave way to the almost universal feeling that cannot be fitly described as other than a panic. In a letter to the Bishop of Durham he denounced this papal aggression as insolent and insidious . . . inconsistent with the Queen's Supremacy . . . and with the spiritual independence of the nation.

It was nothing of the kind; at the most it was an indiscretion in tactics. In plain words, Lord John had lost his head. So had the moderate Whigs and the anti-Catholic Tories, who echoed Lord John. In 1851 Russell introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill to

THE ECCLESIASTICAL TITLES BILL

forbid the assumption of territorial titles by Roman priests, and to make void all gifts or legacies in their favour if they were designated by such titles. Peelites and Cobdenites were united in opposition to the measure. Disraeli assented to its principle, but told Russell to look to his own flock, since the Romanizing clergy within the Church were a greater menace than Roman bishops.

Vicissitudes of Lord John Russell

At first Russell was supported by overwhelming majorities on the bill; but his position was already precarious, and the bill, as it turned out, prevented his escape from office. He was almost beaten on the budget, and was completely beaten on parliamentary reform when, opposing a motion to extend the borough franchise to the towns, he gave a promise to introduce a government bill next year. There was a majority of the house against the bill. But Russell's declaration split the Whigs; some of them wanted reform and some did not. The opposition parties, realizing the situation, saw that the ministry would be defeated if the Whigs were allowed to fight it out among themselves. They walked out of the house; Russell was defeated by two to one; and he at once resigned. The tactics of the opposition parties were somewhat too ingenious, but they had the excuse that the ministry was already moribund. Stanley was asked to form a government, but answered that he could not command a stable ministry. An attempt to form a coalition of Whigs and Peelites failed, because neither Graham nor Aberdeen would be responsible for the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

Russell accordingly returned to office, though only to the shadow of power. He passed an attenuated Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, containing provisions which were never obeyed, and imposing penalties which were never enforced.* He tried to trim his budget to suit his House of Commons, and contrived to struggle on, sometimes beaten and sometimes just successful, his tenure always insecure but still unbroken because there was nobody to take his place. His

* The Ecclesiastical Titles Act was quietly repealed in 1871.

fall was due in the end to one of his own colleagues, Palmerston, and was occasioned by a break in the tenuous bond which had hitherto held them together.

As a diplomatist the fault of Palmerston was that he confused bluster with strength. There can be little doubt, nevertheless, that in England his swashbuckling methods were popular, and were a help to the ministry at a time when there was little else in its policy to win general favour. Aberdeen's conciliatory ways had provoked some reaction; he was voted a milksop. Palmerston, on the other hand, made the British lion roar; and, in proportion as it was distressing to those roared at, the sound was comforting to the British lion. There is a large class of Englishmen which enjoys squaring fists and inviting a prospective opponent to "come on," particularly if there is some assurance that he may decide not to do so. It creates the warm glow of bravery, without its cost. Sometimes it even enables the blusterer to get his own way, for fear his sound and fury may after all mean something, or may be supported by unknown reserves of Wellingtons and Nelsons. In the excitement of controversy questions of morality may be forgotten; and forgotten, too, is the risk of being found out when the bluff is penetrated. Nor is it remembered that a discovered braggart is a weakened and discredited diplomatist; still less that it is apt to be very expensive to create international uneasiness; for, as policy dictates expenditure, more money must be spent upon the army and the navy to support "a spirited foreign policy" than is required by a policy of conciliation and friendly discussion.

Palmerston's Foreign Policy

In the long run this Nemesis troubled the declining days of the Russell ministry, since the hesitations and changes in the budget of 1851 were really occasioned by the alarms and excursions of Palmerston. Hitherto the Whigs had been saved by the Peelites. "It is a choice of dangers," Graham had written to his chief, shortly before Peel's death in 1850, "and I am disposed to think that Palmerston and his foreign policy are less to be dreaded than Stanley and a new Corn Law."

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A foreign ambassadress defined Palmerston's policy in 1847 as "Revolution everywhere and rivalry with France." He began with France and was over-reached. Louis Philippe, set upon strengthening his position by dynastic alliances, and repulsed by the eastern courts, married one of his sons to a Spanish princess. In fear of that ancient terror of British diplomats, a renewal

"trop père, et pas assez peuple." When he came shortly afterwards to a reckoning with his people it was a disadvantage that the good understanding with England had been broken and that Palmerston's French friendships were with the opposition instead of with the ministry.

In 1848, when the greater part of Europe was swept by the fires of revolution, and the

watchwords of the hour were nationality and constitutional government, Palmerston played a happier part, though he did not always play it with discretion. He championed the cause of the Magyars of Hungary in their struggle for constitutional freedom; and of the Italians in their efforts to throw off the hated yoke of Austria. Both attempts failed. Palmerston could give them little more than diplomatic support, though he strained neutrality to breaking-point in allowing arms from Woolwich Arsenal to be sold to the Italians, and he intervened successfully to prevent Turkey from sur-



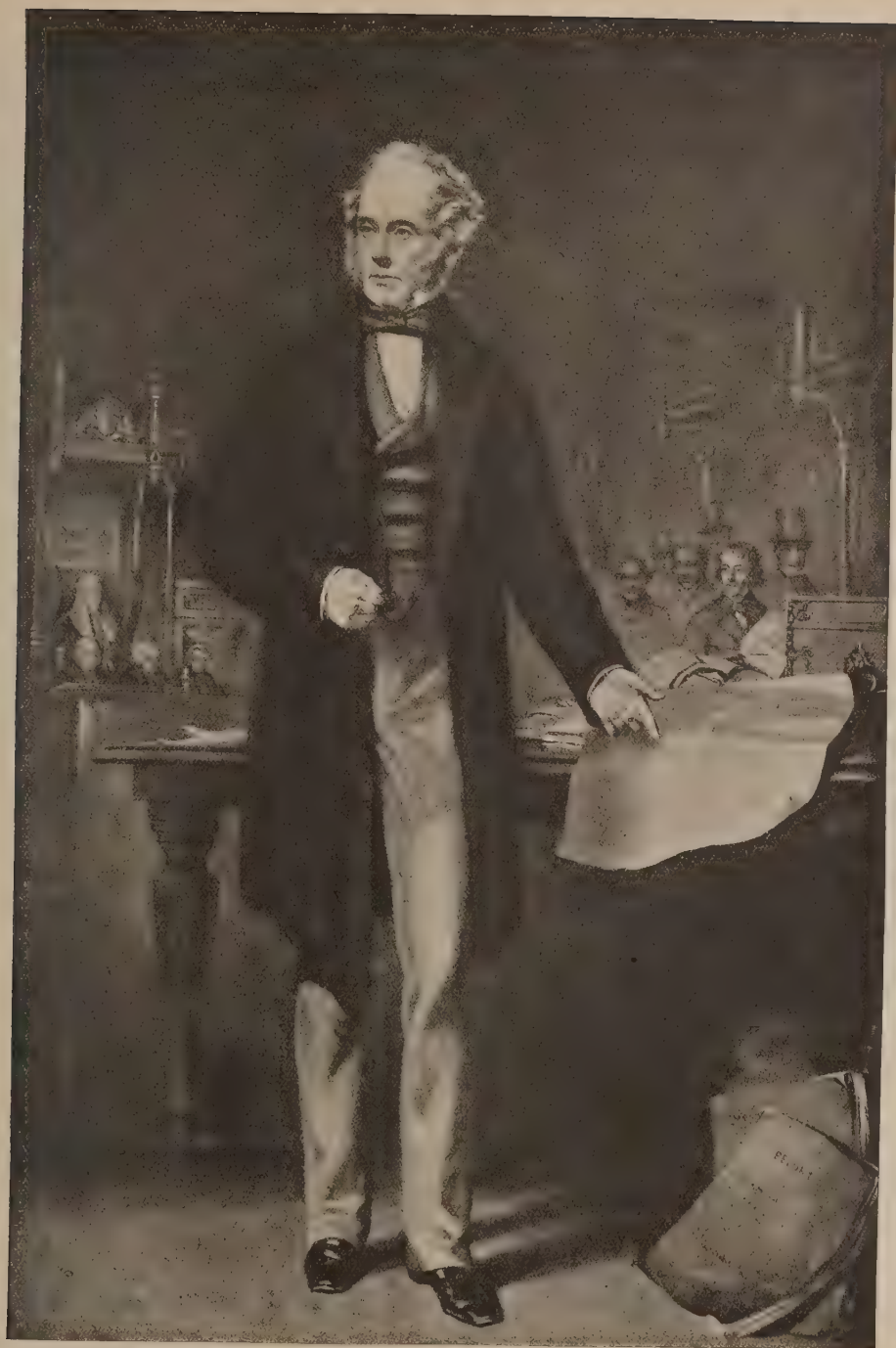
"THIS IS THE BOY WHO CHALKED UP 'NO POPERY'—AND THEN RAN AWAY!"

From the Cartoon by John Leech, in "Punch," April 12th, 1851, by special permission of the Proprietors.

of the Family Compact between France and Spain, Palmerston had done his best to stop the marriage, or to postpone it until the Queen of Spain was assured of an heir, and thought that he could rely on pledges given to Aberdeen that the latter course would be followed. So, when the marriage was arranged in accordance with French rather than English ideas, he felt that he had been tricked, and complained all the more loudly of the cheat since he was not altogether innocent of the charge of trying to trick the French by arranging a Coburg marriage for the infanta. "I will speak to you no more of an *entente cordiale*," he told the French ambassador. But Louis Philippe hurt himself much more than he hurt England. Lamartine criticized him as

rendering the Hungarian refugees to the vengeance of Austria. Turkey, developing an unsuspected zeal for liberty, resisted the combined pressure of Austria and Russia, and the Hungarian patriots, whose own zeal for the liberties of other people was less constant than might have been desired, escaped with their lives. The tsar, who had constituted himself the defender of Austria, and had saved the monarchy by lending troops to the emperor, was furious at this rebuff. The struggle between Nicholas and Palmerston had begun once more.

Palmerston grew more truculent with time. He ignored his colleagues, flouted the queen and the prince consort, and acted as if he were a law unto himself. With a section of his admiring public he dimmed



LORD PALMERSTON

From the Engraving in the British Museum, by G. Zobel, after the Painting by F. Cruikshank.

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his own fame and spoiled his reputation as the protector of small nations by bullying Greece. He sent the Mediterranean fleet to Athens to enforce two small claims against the government on behalf of British subjects: one of the claims, that of Finlay the historian, was just; the other, that of Don Pacifico, a Mediterranean Jew who

phrase turned the vote, but it did not alter opinions, and the Commons confirmed merely his principles without endorsing his acts.

The opposition perhaps hardly realized the trouble that Palmerston was giving to his colleagues. He showed too promiscuous a sympathy for rebels against nominally friendly states, and was with difficulty restrained from offering them hospitality. Here the public, knowing little of diplomatic courtesies, and probably caring less, considered only the cause for which the rebel had suffered, and, calling him a patriot instead of a rebel, gave its sympathies to Palmerston. In diplomatic intercourse Palmerston manifested all too clearly his dislike of Austria, while the prejudices of the court ran the opposite way. In sending out his dispatches he seldom gave the queen (or Prince Albert) time to read the documents issued in the name of the Crown. The queen protested; Palmerston apologized, promised not to offend in future, and promptly sinned again. As it happened, while the court was more often wrong than right in point of policy, it was entirely justified in its objections to the procedure adopted in carrying out the policy. Palmerston treated his colleagues much as he treated the court. And this was a mistake, for in most cases they would have been compelled to support his policy against the family or Teutonic prejudices of Prince Albert, and the influence of the court would then have been lessened rather than increased just where it was most dangerous, though the curb would have been constitutionally applied. For some time ministers hesitated to get rid of the foreign secretary, fearing, rightly, that dismissal would make him a popular hero. When at length Russell had made up his mind to take the decisive step of removing him, Palmerston destroyed himself.

In December, 1851, Louis Napoleon, President of the French, executed the first of the two *coups d'état* which made him emperor. For the moment he merely extended his term of office as president, but the famous precedent of the consulate sufficed to show whither the new Napoleon was moving. The queen, stretching her prerogative rather far, ordained neutrality. Palmerston ac-



EDWARD STANLEY, FOURTEENTH EARL OF DERBY

From the Painting by F. R. Say, in the National Portrait Gallery.

could claim British nationality, was just in principle but swindling in amount; and in any case to use the British fleet to collect small debts was like using a Nasmyth hammer to crush a poppy-seed. Moreover, in acting the bailiff, Palmerston had once more contrived to annoy France, for he had accepted French mediation and then acted before it could take effect. This time he had outraged a considerable section of public opinion. A vote of censure upon him passed the Lords. In the Commons he saved himself only by an eloquent appeal to prejudice, making his famous declaration that the British subject should be able, wherever he found himself, to say, like the Romans of old, "*Civis Romanus sum.*" A



INTERIOR OF THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1851

From the Painting by Louis Haghe, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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cepted the policy, embodied it in his written dispatches, and allowed it to become clear in his conversation with the French ambassador that, so far from being neutral, he approved of what had been done. The bi-lingual policy of the foreign secretary became known; the queen demanded explanations; none that was satisfactory was forthcoming, as three was none to give; and Russell dismissed Palmerston, to prevent the queen dismissing him herself. Palmerston had committed a great error, and Russell saved the queen from a greater. At that moment the security of the cabinet system hung in the balance. Both the queen and Palmerston acted as its enemies. Russell saved the constitution from the errors of both, and was himself the sacrifice. The last shred of popularity departed from the ministry when Palmerston left it, and two months later the fallen minister had the exquisite pleasure of helping to carry a vote against the government which implied that it was inadequately prepared for defence. Russell resigned, and was succeeded by Lord Derby.

Derby's "Ten-Months' Ministry"

When the Protectionists took office in 1852 they had not a majority, and their cabinet was as full of improvisations as a prize crew. Much later Disraeli described in *Endymion* how "a dozen men, without the slightest experience of official life," went down to the queen at Windsor and "had to be sworn in as privy councillors, before even they could receive the seals and insignia of their intended offices . . . a spectacle never seen before, and which, in all probability, will never be seen again." Derby, the prime minister, was the only man of real experience in the cabinet; Herries, aged and of disputed ability, the only colleague who had ever sat in a cabinet before. It was said wittily that the ministry consisted of three men and a half: Derby, Disraeli, St. Leonards (the lord chancellor, once Peel's awkward and troublesome Irish chancellor) were the three; the half is supposed to have been Northumberland, who was at the admiralty, but the honours of the fraction might be disputed. A foreign observer said that the ministry

was "stronger in the head than in the arms and legs"; and even Disraeli spoke a little disconsolately of his "raw troops." Disraeli himself was chancellor of the exchequer and leader of the Commons. Most of the other ministers were then almost unknown.

It was not, however, its lack of experience but its lack of votes that prevented the "ten-months' ministry" from achieving anything. It was compelled to engage in that oldest of political occupations, sitting on the fence. Ministers, said Gladstone, were Protectionist in the country, neutral in a small town, Free Traders in a large one; for Maynooth in Ireland, against it in Scotland. They did not attempt to alter the Free-Trade system. After the general election of 1852 had shown them to have gained only a little strength in the country, which was still for Free Trade, Derby followed Disraeli in accepting the country's verdict. In December, 1852, ministers were defeated on Disraeli's budget, which had proved a dismal failure, and they resigned.

Four Outstanding Events

Four events of these years deserve mention in this chapter. Trade unionists had been busily organizing new machinery for the industrial warfare needed to secure higher wages and better conditions of labour. In 1850 the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a national organization with large funds and under able leadership, was successfully established and became a "new model" of trade-union organization, extensively imitated during the next few years. In 1850 also Ewart's Act made possible the foundation of the modern system of free public libraries, an important advance in the provision of means for popular education. In 1851 "the great bazaar at Kensington," as Ruskin scornfully called the Great Exhibition, showed that the country was growing in resources, prosperity and productive power. And in the same year John Owens left a sum of nearly £100,000 to found and endow a college in Manchester, which in due time became the first of those city universities which are so marked a feature of the development of the means for higher learning in the English provinces.



SCENE AT CHARING CROSS, 1850

From the Painting by Eugene L. Lami, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHAPTER XV

THE COALITION MINISTRY (1852-4)

IT was just a week before Christmas that the "Who's Who Ministry," as it was called by mirthful opponents, fell in consequence of its defeat on the budget. The Peelites had contributed most to its fall, and it is amusing to recall that the house-tax, which Gladstone had criticized with severity, was the tax to which he had advised Peel to turn ten years before in preference to an income-tax, when Peel's ministry was searching for a new source of revenue in order to finance its first Free-Trade budget. But the Peelites were few; exactly how few it is hard to determine; Malmesbury estimated on the morrow of the Tory defeat that they commanded 46 votes in the Commons, but the next day he made them only 30, while he gave the Derbyites as 292, the Whigs as 130, the Radicals as 160, and the "Irish Brigade" as 50.*

* *Diary*, p. 287; cf. Argyll, *Autob. and Memoirs*, i, 374. Morley's *Gladstone*, vol. i, gives Russell's estimate, p. 44, and Gladstone's own, p. 448; Derby's is given in the *Life of Disraeli*, vol. iii, p. 474.

It is not necessary to take this estimate as exact; probably, in the confused state of parties, it was impossible for the waverers on the fringe of each group to determine themselves precisely how they stood; but Malmesbury's unofficial census of the house helps to make clear the difficulty of forming a homogeneous ministry with a stable majority. Leaving out the Peelites and the Irish repealers, the Whigs could, at the best, only rely on about the same number of votes as the fallen ministry, and the best was by no means certain to happen, owing to the schism which had divided their ranks, since Palmerston's dismissal in 1851. Two months before the fall of the Tories it had looked as if Palmerston were more likely to join Derby than to return to the Whig fold. If he had done so the result of such a junction might have produced a healthier condition of political life than prevailed during the next dozen years, for Palmerston's temperament was more congenial to the

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Conservatives than to the Whigs in domestic affairs, while in many respects, though not in all, it had little affinity with that of either Whigs or Peelites in foreign policy. But Palmerston remained a Whig at feud with the Whig leaders, to whom that powerful political force, Lady Palmerston, was, if possible, more hostile than her husband. In consequence, an observer reports at the



SIR WILLIAM MOLESWORTH, BART.

From the Painting by Sir J. Watson Gordon, in the National Portrait Gallery.

end of October, 1852: "The state of the Liberal party appears all but desperate; nothing but some dire necessity can silence discordant opinions and pretensions and produce union." And to add to these personal causes of division there was the increasing determination of the Whig leader, Lord John Russell, to propose a reform of parliament, a determination which separated him from the Whig section of the Liberal party in proportion as it brought him nearer to its Radical wing.

For a week, therefore, there was political chaos, in which anything might have happened. The Tories and the Whigs were alike too weak to stand alone. The Tories were too feeble in experience or ability to

command public confidence, while the two Whig chieftains were so much at variance that neither would serve under the other. The Peelites, who had produced the crisis, consisted of an able general staff with scarcely any army. And since the election of 1852 had shown that an appeal to the country was unlikely to simplify the situation, it followed that the only escape from the confusion must be found in some form of coalition. The queen sent for Lansdowne, the *doyen* of the Whigs, and for Aberdeen, the Peelite leader, and urged them to join in forming a ministry from the two parties. Lansdowne, who was seventy-two, and gouty, declined the task, but Aberdeen succeeded in forming a ministry in which Lansdowne agreed to serve, though without office.

The cabinet consisted of six Whigs, six Peelites, and a Radical. The Peelites did well, with thirty or forty followers, to capture as many offices, and those not the least important, as were assigned to the Whigs with close on three hundred supporters. One very moderate Whig, Lord Clarendon, thought that "they should have been more self-denying and have remembered that the best generals are helpless without troops." But they brought at least as much ability to the common stock as their Whig allies. Aberdeen took the treasury, Gladstone the exchequer, Graham the admiralty, Newcastle war and the colonies, Sidney Herbert became secretary at war, and the Duke of Argyll* was lord privy seal. Of the Whigs, Russell led the House of Commons and was for a short time foreign secretary, Palmerston took the home office, Wood the Indian board of control, Cranworth was lord chancellor, Earl Granville was lord president, and Lansdowne had a seat in the cabinet but held no office. The Radical was Sir William Molesworth, a wealthy country gentleman, whose Radicalism was of a somewhat academic order, very different from the active Radicalism of men of

* Argyll is erroneously described as a Whig by Sir Herbert Maxwell, *Life of Clarendon*, i, 352; he was too young to be a Peelite in the same sense as his colleagues who had served with Peel, but he was a personal follower of Aberdeen. See his *Autob.*, i, 370.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE COALITION

the school of Bright. The sole ally of the genuine Radicals who found even a subordinate place in the ministry belonged to a great Whig family and was only given the minor office of judge-advocate-general.

Constituents of the Coalition

"This, too, I know, that England does not love coalitions," Disraeli had said in the peroration to that brilliant defence of his budget which preceded his defeat. Disraeli's history, though stimulating, was apt to be imaginative. There is no warrant for the belief that England hates coalitions as such; rather the reverse, for it would be difficult to point to very many ministries since the middle of the eighteenth century that have not, in some sense, been coalitions. At the moment when he spoke, Disraeli's own chief was Derby, to whom might have been applied the words which Argyll used of Graham: "he was a coalition in himself." One of his colleagues was a renegade Peelite who had but recently thrown in his lot with Derby, and another had served with the Canningites, with Wellington and with Peel; while Disraeli himself had once been what he called a Radical, and, as the author of *Popanilla*, had once presumably been a Free Trader; he had led the fight against Free Trade, and then, in his own words, "withdrew the Tory party gradually from the hopeless question of Protection." In this there is nothing disgraceful. In politics the man who stands unchanging in a changing world has ceased to grow, just as the party which clings to old opinions in new conditions, to which they are no longer applicable, ceases to be useful.

There was therefore nothing new, nothing hateful or dishonest, in the principle on which the coalition of 1852 was established. Its members were agreed on most of the great questions of practical politics, and made fewer sacrifices of conviction or compromises of opinion than had been involved, during the previous six years, in the government of the country by ministries without a majority in the Commons. "In its deliberations," said Gladstone long afterwards, the Aberdeen cabinet "never exhibited the marks of its dual origin. . . . In itself I

hardly ever saw a cabinet with greater promise of endurance."*

Difficulties and discontents there were, of course. Gladstone's own constituents at Oxford were uneasy, and he had to fight a sharp battle in order to retain his seat. During the contest words were used in regard to him that would have been harsh in condemnation of Jemmy Twitcher; while his religious views, if they had been as represented, would have been an ingenious compound of Roman Catholicism and Scottish Presbyterianism. In spite of opposition Gladstone was re-elected by a small majority, but the revolt of some of his old supporters showed how keenly the fusion with the Whigs was disliked in some Conservative and Church circles. One crusted Tory abused the "grandissima Coalition-Composition" to a Whig correspondent as "composed of all colours, with a seeming oblivion or nullification of all former lines of policy, principles and system." Some Conservatives objected to it because Whigs and Peelites had united when in opposition, and some because they had not. Nor were the Whigs altogether pleased. The Bedford clique thought that Lord John Russell had not been treated with enough consideration; the Greys were indignant because Sir Charles Wood, who had married Mary Grey, was the only member of the clan in office; if Lord John went on in that way, said Lady Mary, he would lose all his followers; and "then," retorted her hearer, "he might have a chance!"

The Whigs and the Coalition

There is no doubt that the Aberdeen ministry was a shock to the old Whig families. "I want winding up and regulating," wrote the witty Miss Eden. "When my political watch stopped I thought Lord Aberdeen a cold, yellow Scotchman turned up with black and malice. Lord Derby could not say more against Sir James [Graham] than I thought; and as for Mr. Gladstone, I rather expected that, if he came into power, we might any of us be burnt at Smithfield on his warrant. . . .†

* Argyll says the same thing in almost the same words: *Autobiography*, vol. i, pp. 387-8.

† *Life and Letters of Clarendon*, i, 352.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Miss Eden's lively caricature of her own views is no doubt a fair index to the state of feeling in the old Whig families. These opinions show that in one respect, if no more, the ministry did the Whig party good

evidence is quite clear that, far from hating it, the country was only too glad to give it a welcome. "The country," a good observer on the Whig side believed, "wanted a moderate Liberal government, and a fusion



LABEL USED IN CONNEXION WITH THE PAPER DUTY

This was used by the Excise Office in making a ream of paper for the duties. It is one of the last stamps used (July 17th, 1850) previous to the repeal of the duty.

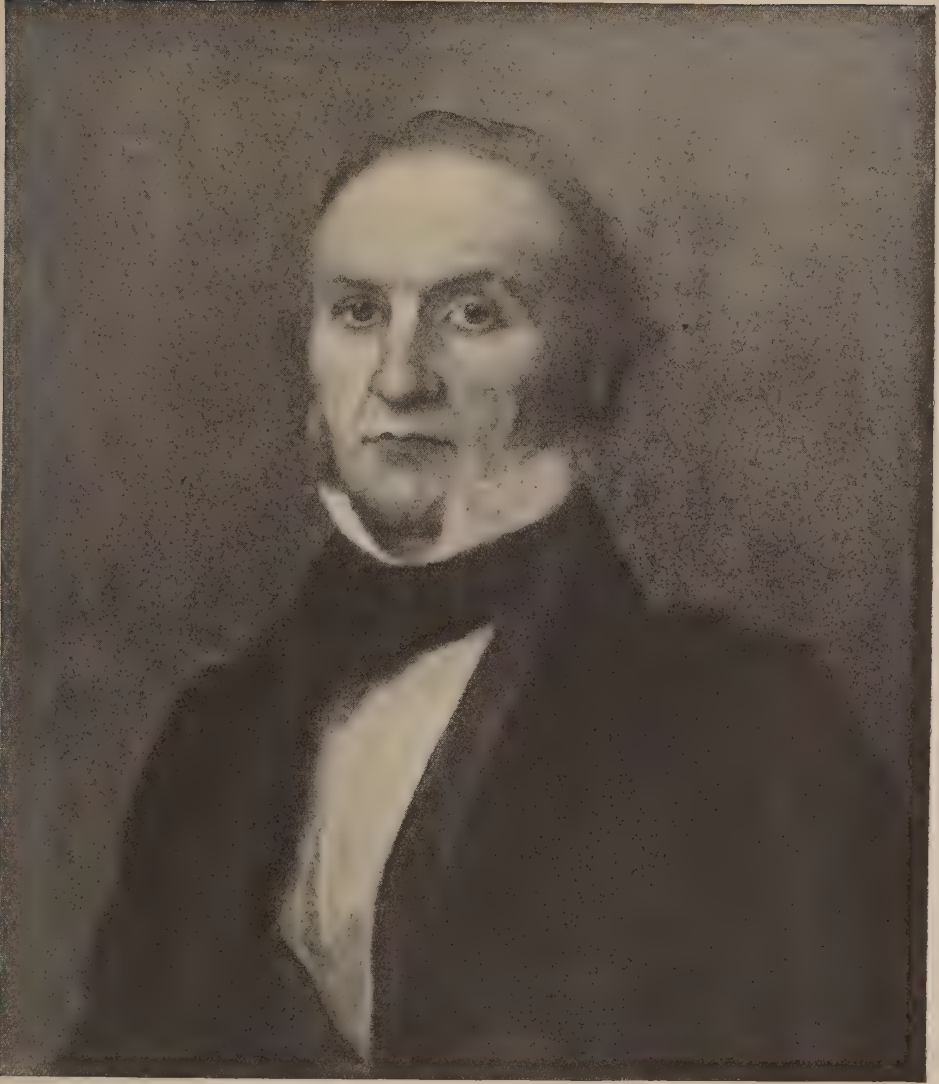
Reproduced, by special permission, from the original in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.

service, since it provided the means of shedding some of the limpets of that old family oligarchy which had prevented Whiggism from becoming a really national party.

Whatever the great official families might say, either for or against the coalition, the

of Liberal Conservatives and moderate Liberals." That want the Aberdeen ministry fulfilled. It consisted of able and experienced men; the conciliatory elements in it prevailed over the disruptive; Peelites and Whigs gradually lost their sense of

THE SHADOW OF WAR



WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE (1858)

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

difference as they acted together ; though cleavages came, as they needs must come in all cabinets, they did not follow party lines ; and finally, when the cabinet broke up it did not break at the joint. In one respect only was the ministry unfortunate : it was made for peace, and its ablest mem-

bers were best suited to carry on quiet but effective domestic administration ; its fate was to make war, for which the cabinet was neither formed nor fitted.

Across the path of the Aberdeen ministry there soon fell the shadow of conflict between England and Russia. In one way,

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

at least, the ministry unconsciously prepared for war. By great good fortune we went to battle with our finances in order, and with our resources so organized that we were able to foot the bill. It was hardly more than an accident that sent Gladstone to the exchequer instead of to the colonial office, but his appointment was one of the most fortunate ministerial arrangements of the century. Nobody guessed at the time that he was worthy to rank with Pitt and Walpole as a minister of finance, though he had helped Peel as much as any man in the great labour of preparing the budget of 1842. When he entered office he found the exchequer in chaos; since Peel's fall, in spite of a few useful reforms our financial history had been an uninterrupted tale of six years' confusion, ineptitude and uncertainty. Counsel was darkened by a multitude of conflicting projects and contradictory remedies. All men were agreed that something must be done but while many were ready to propose that taxes should be lightened or removed, nobody was ready with constructive and workable plans for replacing the lost revenue.

Gladstone's Great Budget

To this situation Gladstone came as a giant to wrestle with difficulty. In three months, after working incessantly for as much as fifteen hours a day, he produced a comprehensive scheme of financial reorganization. Even his closest colleagues were affrighted by its magnitude, and but for Aberdeen's courage the whole plan might never have reached the cabinet. There he had as much trouble in carrying it as he afterwards had in the Commons; but though it was criticized in almost every detail, it was found on close examination that so thoroughly had the budget been prepared that to tamper with its parts might be to destroy it as a whole, and it went to the Commons much as Gladstone had planned it.

Until the budget was introduced the ministerial ship had been struggling against heavy seas; the coalition had at best an uncertain majority, and was not seldom defeated. Gladstone's boldness wrought an almost instant change: alike in the house

and in the city it was well received; public confidence was restored by the assurance that the finances were again in strong hands.

Gladstone and the Income-Tax

The foundation of Gladstone's plan, as of Peel's in 1842, was the income-tax. This was renewed for seven years; in the first two years it was to be sevenpence, in the next two sixpence, and then for three years was to be reduced to fivepence. It was hoped that other changes and economies would so much improve the national balance-sheet that the tax could then be taken off altogether. The war ultimately disappointed the fulfilment of this hope, and Gladstone had to endure many reproaches for his miscalculation.

These reproaches were unjust. The nation has the right to expect of its ministers foresight, not second sight. It was an unprecedented merit in a chancellor of the exchequer to try, even in a limited way, to budget for seven years ahead; and nobody in the spring of 1853 could have foreseen the cost of the Crimean War, even if he had thought the war likely to come. "I ought, no doubt," said Gladstone afterwards, "to have pointed out explicitly that a great disturbance and increase of our expenditure would baffle my reckonings." But he explained the nature and working of the tax so clearly that he was able to still for over fifty years the vague demand for a system of differentiation between fixed and precarious incomes, always difficult, and at that time probably dangerous. His view was that it was better to take special toll of fixed incomes at the moment when they passed in the form of capital or revenue by will or inheritance from one person to another. He therefore extended the operation of the legacy duty, and made it apply to real as well as personal property, and to all property passing by settlements. This roused the hostility of the landed interest, and Derby attacked it bitterly in the House of Lords, but the immediate yield of the duty was disappointing and the landed interest survived the blow.

If Gladstone's hopes of removing the income-tax or of getting a considerable increase of income from successions were not

GLADSTONE'S SKILFUL FINANCE

fulfilled, he was able to take a long step in the simplification of the tariff, begun by Peel, and to provide for large and useful remissions of indirect taxation. Nearly one hundred and forty duties were abolished and nearly one hundred and fifty were lowered. Health and manners as well as purses benefited by the extinction of the excise on soap—an uncleanly expedient—though the change cost the exchequer well over a million pounds a year. The duty on tea was to be reduced, in stages covering three years, from over two shillings a pound to one shilling. The advertisement duty was abolished, to the advantage of trade and of the press. Colonial postage was reduced. The assessed taxes were reformed. A uniform receipt stamp was provided for, and the stamp duty on insurances was reduced to a fifth of its previous amount.

Peace Budget Adapted to War

There were many minor reforms, and it is difficult to state briefly all that was involved in a budget that took three hours to explain to the cabinet, and nearly five to the Commons. Over five millions and a quarter of taxes and duties were remitted. This was balanced partly by an available surplus, partly by changes in the spirit duties, which were extended to Ireland and were in Scotland brought nearer to the English level, partly by making the income-tax apply to Ireland and by imposing it, at a reduced rate, on a lower range of incomes than had hitherto been liable to it. Help was expected also from the legacy duty, though less was obtained from this source than had been looked for.

"The public counted up their gains—a remission on tea, good for twenty shillings a year in an ordinary household; a fall in the washing bill; a boon of a couple of pounds for a man who insured his life for five hundred; an easy saving of ten pounds a year in the assessed taxes, and so forth—the whole performance ending with 'a dissolving view of the decline and fall' of the hated income-tax."*

Not the best-laid plans of a peace budget can withstand the shocks of war. Within twelve months Gladstone, who had essayed

to forecast the nation's income for seven years, found himself obliged to propose a temporary provision for six months.

His war finance was as bold a thing as he ever did. He believed that the cost of war was the "moral check" which it had pleased the Almighty to impose on "ambition and lust of conquest." He abated nothing of the divine ordinance, and strove hard to make the nation pay for its own war by taxation, instead of bequeathing the debt to posterity by raising loans. In the end this proved to be more than even Gladstone could accomplish, though if the war had been shorter he might have come near to success. Reductions in the customs, excise and stamp duties had proved their worth by bringing in a greater revenue from the decreased duties than had been earned by the old. Gladstone doubled the income-tax and augmented indirect taxation by increasing the duties on spirits, malt and sugar, seeking thus to lay the burden on all sections of the community. He was out of office when the budget of 1855 was brought forward, but he had left it ready prepared, and with few changes his successor accepted it as an inheritance. Thanks to the healthy condition of the revenue and to the industrial prosperity of the country, it was in the end found possible so far to fulfil Gladstone's heroic design of paying for the war out of income that nearly half its cost was met by taxation. Of the seventy-seven millions that are estimated to have been spent directly on the war, about thirty-five were paid out of revenue and only about forty-two were added to the national debt. And to Gladstone is due the chief credit for this honourable result.

Lord John Russell's Reform Bill

Shortly before the defeat of his ministry Lord John Russell had introduced a very mild Reform Bill. When he accepted office in the coalition ministry he had stipulated that he should be allowed, after a month or two, to resign the foreign office to Lord Clarendon, in order that he might devote himself to his duties as leader of the Commons and have leisure to deal with the question of reform. He held office for about seven

* Morley: *Life of Gladstone*, i, 472.

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weeks, and on February 21st, 1853, resigned in Lord Clarendon's favour, having meantime done at least one act which was fraught with serious consequences—the appointment of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe as ambassador to the Porte.

Russell continued to lead the house and to sit in the cabinet though he held no parliamentary office and drew no salary.



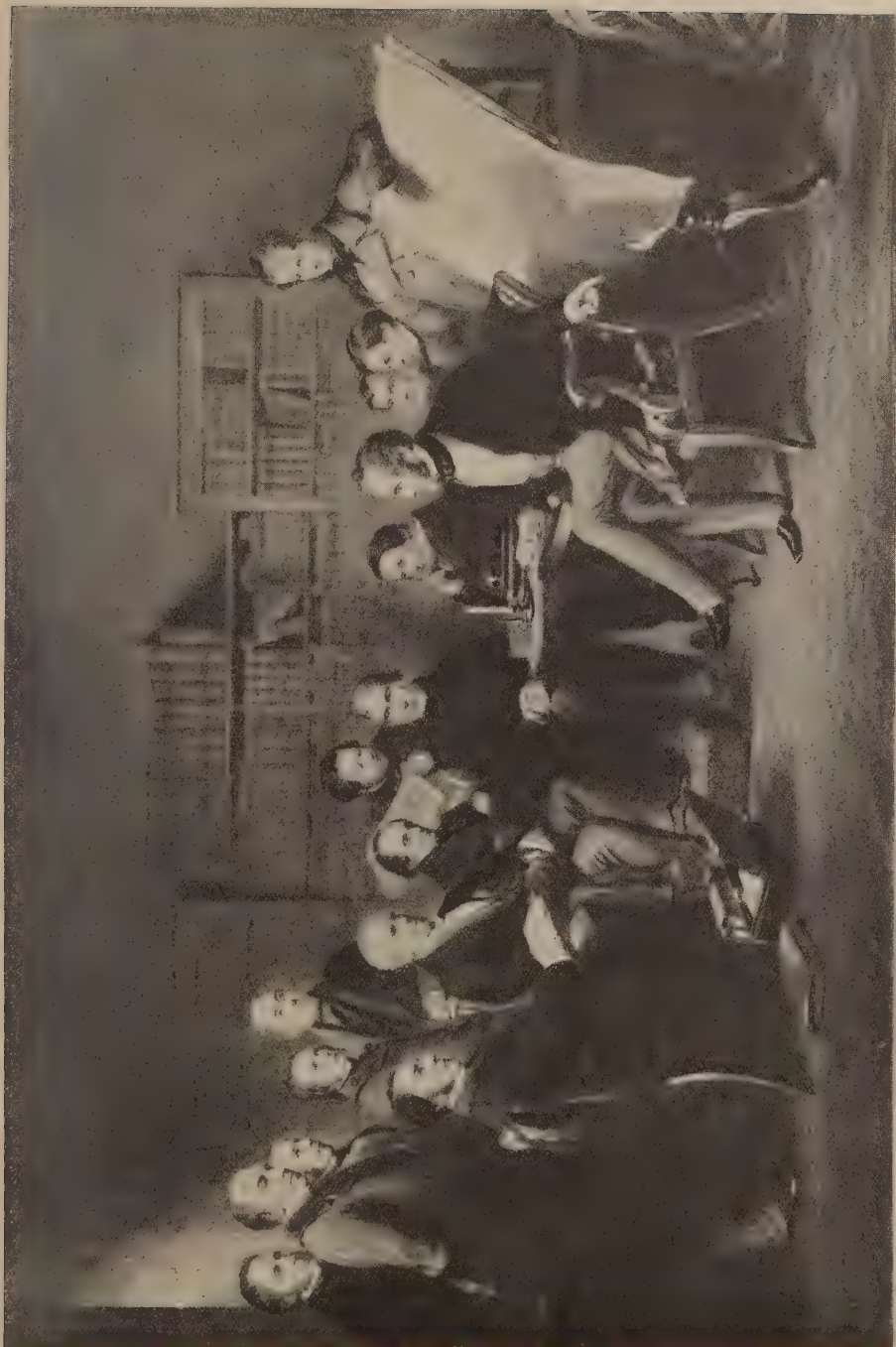
VISCOUNT STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE

From the Chalk Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

The idea of freeing the leader of the house from administrative cares had much to commend it; but a good thing was never managed in a worse way. Nor did Russell manage reform much better. In 1853 he had to announce, almost at the outset of the session, that it would be postponed until the next year. When his bill appeared in 1854 it proved to be one of those feeble measures which are just strong enough to excite hostility without being bold enough to make friends feel that they are worth a sacrifice. Roughly, it would have deprived a few of the smaller boroughs of separate representation, approximated the county franchise to the borough franchise of 1832, and reduced the qualification in boroughs

from ten pounds to six. "Much astonishment and no enthusiasm," was Graham's verdict; "but on the whole . . . the country gentlemen expected something worse and the Radicals something more." For two months the bill remained in a state of suspended animation, and then was strangled by its authors.

Another reform of importance met with a happier fate than the Franchise Bill. Gladstone did for the University of Oxford what Russell had failed to do for the House of Commons. In 1850 Russell had set up a commission to inquire into the condition and revenues of Oxford and Cambridge; and this body reported in favour of sweeping reforms. Gladstone had opposed the commission, but he urged members of his own university to reform it from within, and the Derby government had invited the universities to examine the recommendations of the commissioners. Nothing had been done, though a fierce battle raged in Oxford between the party of reform, led by men like Jowett and Stanley, and the defenders of the existing order. Many harsh things were said of the university, some of them exaggerated. The colleges were too much akin to close corporations to be long preserved unless they were reformed; and Gladstone, in the conviction that it would be better for the work to be done by a friend rather than an enemy, accepted from the Aberdeen ministry the task of drawing up a bill. The government of the university was reformed, "sleeping endowments" were awakened, sinecures were abolished, merit was made the qualification for college emoluments, the professorial system was reorganized, and an attempt made to give it life; and, finally, the tests which precluded dissenters from matriculating or graduating were removed so far as to enable them to reach the bachelor's degree though they were still excluded from the rewards and government of the university. Closely associated with the Oxford University Act in the mind of its chief sponsor was a plan for recruiting the civil service by competition instead of patronage, and so at one and the same time opening an extensive avenue to honourable and useful careers for some

[illegible]

MEETING OF THE ABERDEEN CABINET, 1854

From the Engraving in the National Portrait Gallery, by W. Walker, after the Drawing by Sir John Gilbert, R.A., repainted in miniature by Elizabeth Walker.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

of the best brains of the universities, and quickening the public services with new life.

Oddly enough, Gladstone met with the most obstinate resistance from Lord John, who now showed that inability to realize the dependence of political reform upon administrative efficiency for its adequate fulfilment which was one of the curses of Whiggism. "This," Gladstone told him, "is my contribution to parliamentary reform." The new plan was adopted in the cabinet in 1854, but owing to various delays it was not even partially put into operation until 1855 and 1857, and not by any means fully until many years later. Patronage was too useful a help to politicians to be surrendered lightly.

The domestic record of the Aberdeen cabinet was no bad one. The weaknesses of the ministry were shown both in foreign policy and in war. Disraeli, in a passage in *Endymion*, says that "the country was

governed for two years by all its ablest men, who, by the end of that term, had succeeded, by their coalesced genius, in reducing that country to a state of desolation and despair." Possibly an excess of conflicting genius of very different kinds, moved by very different temperaments, contributed to the confusion of policies of which the war with Russia was the outcome. The cabinet included, besides the foreign secretary of the moment, four ministers who had held the seals of the foreign office for longer or shorter spells. Yet their collective wisdom produced only divided counsels, and undesired results. Under the direction of one dominating mind the cabinet might have been admirable. But Aberdeen's mind was not dominating; it was seldom made up. The prime minister was so wedded to peace that he came to be responsible for a war which he could not persuade himself was just.



UNIFORMS OF THE BRITISH ARMY, 1855

1, Foot Guards. 2, Rifles. 3, Line. 4, Hussars. 5, Highlanders. 6, Foot Artillery. 7, Household Cavalry. 8, Dragoon Guards. 9, Officer, Field Artillery. 10, Royal Horse Artillery. 11, 17th Lancers. 12, Light Dragoons.

From a Drawing by W. B. Wollen, R.I.



NAVAL REVIEW AT SPITHEAD, 1855

Her Majesty Queen Victoria, in *The Fairy* passing through the lines of ships.

From "*The Illustrated London News*," March 24th, 1855.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CRIMEAN WAR AND THE ACCESSION OF PALMERSTON (1853-8)

OSTENSIBLY the quarrel began with a dispute between Roman Catholics, supported by France, and representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church, upheld by Russia, in regard to the custody of the holy places at Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The dispute would have had small political significance if it had not opened out into wider controversies and aroused stronger feelings than were to be excited in the middle of the nineteenth century by a mere diplomatic discussion on the rivalries of Greek or Latin monks, and on their competing claims to control those holy places to which pilgrimage was wont to be made.

"The game," said a French diplomatist, "is not worth the candle."* It was not the spirit of the Crusades, but national and even personal rivalries, that impelled Europe to battle. The events of 1848 had left Russia in a position of great apparent strength, and had enhanced enormously the personal influence of the Tsar Nicholas. He had helped to restore the Habsburg

authority in Hungary in 1849, and thought that he could rely upon the ties of gratitude which bound Francis Joseph to Russia. Austria on its recovery had taken occasion to humiliate Prussia, and, in proportion as he resented Austrian slights, the King of Prussia drew more closely towards his brother-in-law Nicholas. Russia was therefore the predominant power in eastern Europe, and Nicholas thought that the time had come to force the recurrent quarrel between Russia and Turkey to a decisive issue.

It seems to be untrue that the opinion of Russian diplomatists was unanimous; there were perhaps as many hesitations at St. Petersburg as in London, and the tsar certainly received warnings. But he underrated the chances of joint action by the western powers in case he adopted an aggressive policy towards Turkey. Louis Napoleon seemed insecurely seated in his new saddle as Emperor of the French, and the tsar counted his insecurity on the wrong side of the balance-sheet; for the considera-

* Walewski, in 1851, quoted Bourgeois, 361.

tions which had made Louis Philippe pacific drove Napoleon III to restless action in the hope of avoiding his predecessor's mistakes and of conciliating the support first of one party and then of another. Moreover, Nicholas believed that England could not go to war without allies; he did not see where she was to find them; and though his attempts during his visit to London in 1844 to reach an understanding with England for the adoption of a common policy on the break-up of Turkey had met with a rebuff, it seems that, possibly misled by the conciliatory language habitual with Aberdeen, he had not abandoned the hope of persuading England to share the spoil of a dismembered Turkish empire.

The Vitality of Turkey

In this he was mistaken. England was pledged, for good or ill, to the doctrine that the integrity of Turkey must be maintained. While the tsar believed that the Turk was an anachronism in Europe, that the Turkish government was effete, that the sick man of the East was at last moribund, and that it remained only to arrange for the funeral and for such a distribution of his estates as might enable Russia to burst through to the open water, in England there were many, Palmerston not least, who believed that Turkey must be sustained because she barred the way to the realization of Russian ambitions, and that she was not merely capable of reform but was actively trying to reform herself. Both were wrong, for Turkey has shown an obstinate vitality as remarkable as her capacity to resist reform. She is like the young lady in the play who was for ever reforming herself but was never reformed, yet she has time after time eluded the penalties of her various misdeeds. Limb after limb has, indeed, been shorn from the Turkish empire, yet, in defiance of all diplomatic doctors, the heart has continued to beat.

It was said long afterwards that in supporting Turkey England had put her money on the wrong horse. Yet, in excuse for a past generation, it has to be remembered that in the middle of the nineteenth century Englishmen were not so easily

able to perceive this. Statesmen did not despair of the success of Turkish reforms: even the tsar's haste, like the haste of his great predecessor Catherine II to complete the dismemberment of Poland, was due in part to an uneasy feeling that the reforms might after all prove effective. Nor were Englishmen as conscious as they afterwards became of the harshness of the Turks towards their Christian subjects, and of the dreadful miseries endured by the Balkan peoples. We were yet a long way from the day when Gladstone could exhort a vast audience on Blackheath to insist that the Turk should be driven "bag and baggage" from Europe, or from the later day when that aged warrior emerged from his retirement to denounce the "unspeakable Turk" at Hengler's Circus. There were even Radicals who were unwilling to see the giant military absolutism inflate itself at Turkey's expense, or to forget that Russia had but recently played the drill-sergeant to Europe at the expense of constitutional reformers in whose affairs she had no legitimate concern.

Napoleon III and Tsar Nicholas

Napoleon III had rushed into the quarrel about the holy places for two main reasons: he resented the tsar's hostile attitude towards the second empire, and he wished, by posing as the protector of Latin Christianity, to enlist Church support in France in order to consolidate his power. To Russia the second empire seemed a revolutionary government; in 1853 Russia was to many people an intruder meddling in the affairs of powers whose internal polity was no concern of hers. The tsar had been uncivil to Napoleon, and Napoleon resented the slight. If the tsar disliked Napoleon's universal suffrage, Napoleon disliked the tsar's manners, and they quarrelled in the name of two historic religions.

The dispute over the guardianship of the holy places would not in itself have caused war. It was, in fact, virtually settled between the representatives of Russia and France at Constantinople in April, 1853, but Menchikov, the Russian envoy, asked in peremptory terms for more; he demanded

ABERDEEN'S PEACE EFFORTS

an explicit acknowledgment of the tsar's right to act as the protector of the mem-



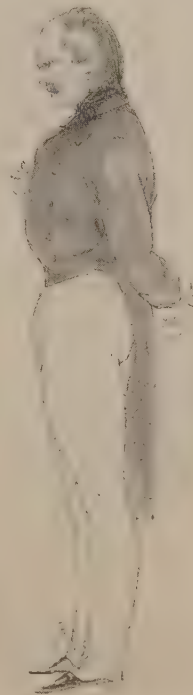
NAPOLEON III

From a Painting formerly in the possession of the Empress Eugénie.

bers of the Greek Church within the sultan's dominions. "No sovereign . . . could admit proposals which conferred upon another and more powerful sovereign a right of protection over his own subjects," wrote Lord Clarendon to our ambassador at Constantinople. "Fourteen millions of Greeks would henceforward regard the emperor as their supreme protector, and their allegiance to the sultan would be little more than nominal while his own independence would dwindle into vassalage." Menshikov threatened, however, that if his terms were not accepted Russian troops would cross the frontiers into Moldavia and Wallachia (Roumania) to secure guarantees for their performance.

Aberdeen's cabinet was united, or professed to be united, in its desire to preserve the peace. But Aberdeen was for "moral influence," while others were for vigorous action, and the unfortunate foreign secretary was as much occupied in harmonizing their differences as in his desperate efforts to find a compromise which would prevent

the Russians and the Turks from flying at each other's throats. And cabinet squabbles were not Clarendon's only handicap. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had enormous influence at Constantinople, and was in many ways better fitted for the embassy to Turkey than any diplomatist of his time, but all his sympathies were enlisted on the side of Turkey, and his hatred of Russia was almost fanatical. Ministers therefore found that their best efforts to devise a peaceful solution of the eastern problem mysteriously failed. Clarendon's letters are full of complaints about the way in which the ambassador conducted his case. In May, 1853, the Russian demands were rejected by Turkey, and in July the Danubian principalities were entered by Russian troops. The four principal powers of Europe



NICHOLAS I

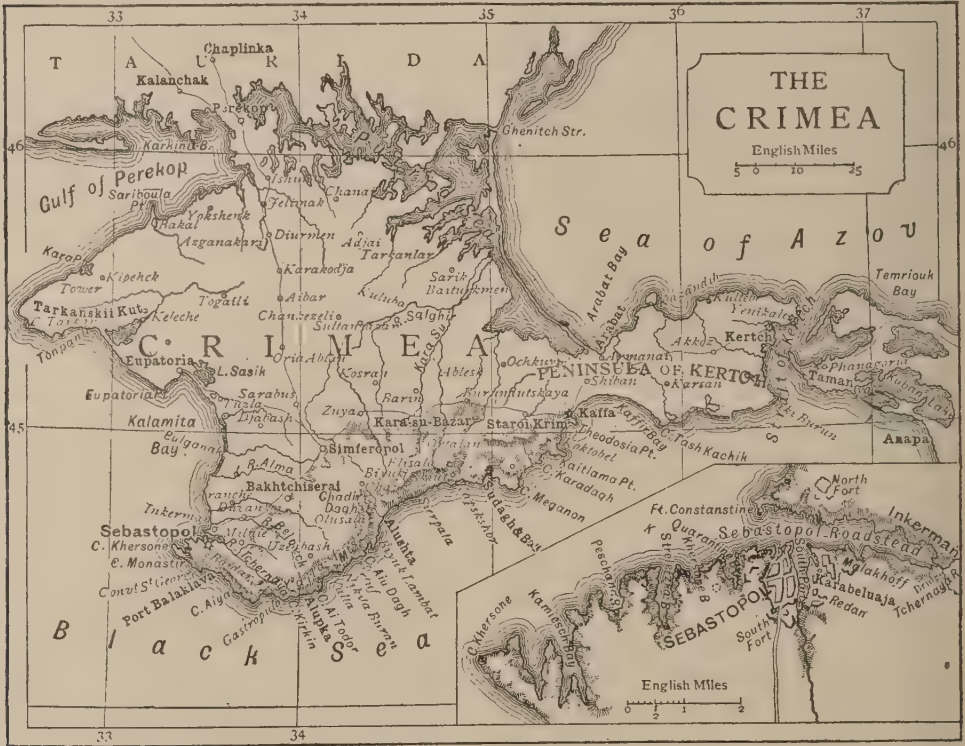
From the Lithograph in the British Museum (1886-1-28-1) by Vincent Brooks (1855), after the Sketch by Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

—Austria and Prussia, France and Great Britain—attempted to devise a compromise between the Turkish fears of vassalage and the Russian claim to protect the Greek Christians. This was embodied in what is called the Vienna Note. The tsar readily accepted it, but the Turks feared that it merely disguised, in a new form of words,

The demand met with a curt refusal, and the Turks declared war upon Russia. In November a Russian fleet made a bonfire of eleven Turkish vessels at Sinope, and four thousand Turkish sailors lost their lives.

These two events seem to mark the critical points in the negotiations. The first offered a legitimate ground for leaving Turkey to



the original Russian demands; and this, as it subsequently turned out, was the sense in which the Russians themselves interpreted it.

After numerous wearisome attempts to modify the document so as to render it acceptable to both parties the negotiations failed. The search for a compromise was not abandoned, but as a precautionary measure the English and French fleets were sent to the Dardanelles. Then the crisis was precipitated by Turkey itself. In October it demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from the occupied provinces.

fight her own battle, since she had provoked active war while the powers were trying to mediate, but the western powers did not accept the opportunity of withdrawing from the contest. The second showed that Russia was determined upon war, and proved, in the view of the majority of Englishmen, that negotiation with her was a hollow sham.

It was now clear that the integrity of Turkey was in danger, and if the defence of that principle be once admitted as a legitimate aim of British policy, or if contemporary fears of Russia are regarded as being well founded, then it is difficult to

OUTBREAK OF WAR

resist the conclusion that Great Britain could not, after this stage had been reached, have avoided war with Russia. Aberdeen thought that war ought to have been avoided at some point, but he could not say at what point the ministry made its mistake. The Manchester men thought it ought to have been avoided, because they did not admit that the integrity of Turkey was worth defending or that fears of Russia were more than the phantoms of overheated imagina-

Britain made a treaty of alliance with the sultan (March 12th) and openly declared war against Russia (March 27th). A fortnight later (April 10th, 1854) France and England entered into an alliance with each other.

Turkey had at first done unexpectedly well on her own account. The Russian campaign in the principalities had not been as successful as the tsar had hoped; his troops had met with reverses and had made no substantial progress. Moreover, Austria



SEBASTOPOL IN 1854

From a Lithograph in the British Museum, after a Drawing by W. Telbin.

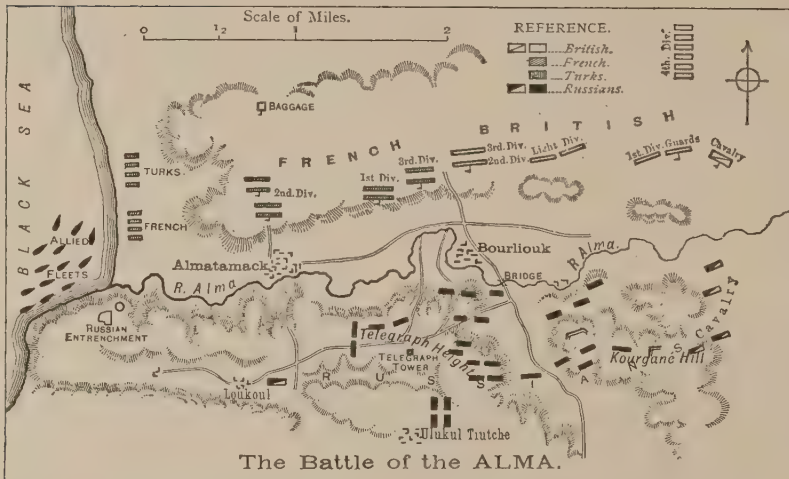
tions. As more than thirty-five thousand dispatches were received and sent out by the foreign office in 1853, it is quite possible that we are not yet in a position to pronounce final judgment on the diplomacy of that unlucky year.

Public opinion in England was decided enough. After the bonfire at Sinope it was hot in favour of war. In January, 1854, the English and French fleets entered the Black Sea; the tsar asked for explanations, and, as none were or could be forthcoming that were likely to be satisfactory to Russia, on February 4th he withdrew his ambassadors. Ministers still clung pathetically to the belief that the thing that had happened had not happened. Even ten days later Clarendon would go no farther in the House of Lords than to admit that we were "drifting towards war." Then France and Great

and Prussia played what he regarded as an ungrateful part—they insisted on the evacuation of the principalities. The tsar had to give way, and Moldavia and Wallachia were occupied by Austria (August, 1854) on Turkey's behalf until the end of the war. This was a diplomatic victory; but the presence of an allied force at Varna (May-September) no doubt contributed to it.

In September the allies took the offensive, and landed an army of fifty-eight thousand men at Eupatoria, for an attack upon the great naval arsenal at Sebastopol, the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea fleet. On the second day of the march to Sebastopol it found itself confronting a force of fifty thousand Russians at the battle of the Alma; this force protected the front of the enemy, whose troops occupied a range of hills sloping down to the stream's

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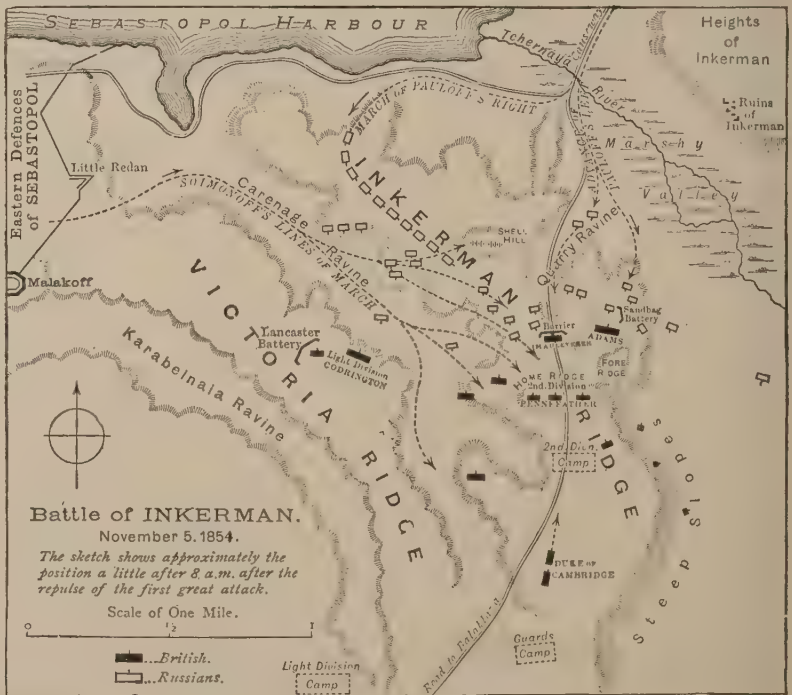
PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA, SEPTEMBER 20, 1854

edge. The British showed great gallantry; the Russian force was not merely routed, but disorganized and dispersed.

Had the success been followed up without delay, probably Sebastopol would have been taken at once. But the French commander was against an immediate advance, and opportunity was given for the preparation of Sebastopol to stand a siege. If the French general and the British artillerymen were determined not to be balked of a siege in form by the precipitate victory of mere cavalrymen and foot soldiers,

defence, and of naval blunders, to protect the harbour by sinking some of their own vessels across its mouth; and a success of surprise was thereafter impossible. The allied armies took up their positions for a

the events proved that they were not to be disappointed. In Sebastopol were two extremely able and gallant men, General Todleben and Admiral Kornilov. They took advantage of military delays, to put the town in a state of





WINTER IN THE CRIMEA

An outlying picket of the 90th Regiment in the snow, in the Middle Ravine, before Sebastopol.

From "The Illustrated London News," March 10th, 1855

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regular siege, though they did not invest the town, and, to the delighted astonishment of the Russians, they did not even attempt an immediate storm.

Counsels among the allies were divided, not merely as to their main plan but as to the details of its execution. What

the 93rd Highlanders, directed by Sir Colin Campbell, and then by a brilliant charge of the Heavy Brigade, before a great blunder altered our fortunes.

Lord Lucan, who commanded the cavalry as a whole, and Lord Cardigan, who was in command of the Light Brigade, were brothers-in-law—and foes. They were at cross purposes during the whole day. As a result the Light Brigade failed to charge when its onset might have completed the work of the Heavy Brigade and of the forces which had come to its support. When the Light Brigade at last came into action, through a wilful misunderstanding by Lord Lucan of the commander-in-chief's orders it charged in the wrong direction and rode straight upon the Russian guns. It was a magnificent act of gallantry from which only the remnants of a force of six hundred men returned alive. The charge was as useless as it was brave. Indirectly, no doubt, it helped, along with the work of the Heavy Brigade, to spread through the Russian ranks a convenient dread of British cavalry, but an important part of our strength had been needlessly and unprofitably sacrificed. The Russians did not succeed in driving the British from their headquarters at Balaklava, but they had to be left in possession of the heights which they had won.

Fresh reinforcements enabled the Russian army to renew the attack upon the allies on November 5th, with the hope of driving them into the sea and relieving Sebastopol. The Russians numbered forty thousand, while the British and French together could muster for battle only fourteen thousand men. In darkness and in mist the battle of Inkerman began. There was little chance for tactical skill or generalship of any kind on either side. The battle fought itself. The hostile troops were interlocked from the outset, and the result depended upon the undirected gallantry and endurance of isolated groups and even of individuals. It has been well called a soldiers' battle, for it was won first by the bayonet in hand-to-hand encounters, and then by superior rifle-fire, and above all by the steadiness of the men throughout. Inkerman was a great victory for the Allies, and a great



FIELD MARSHAL LORD RAGLAN

From the Mezzotint (1854) by H. Cousins, in the British Museum, after the Painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A.

Kinglake called "piebald councils of war" were even more hostile to success than the dispositions of the enemy. Through criminal folly, the Russian army, defeated at the Alma, had been allowed free movement, and it had rallied. Reinforced, it attacked (on October 25th) the British position at Balaklava, "the English arsenal, the English storehouse, and the English port." Through the failure of the Turkish gunners some commanding heights were then lost to the Russians, but the day had been more than half retrieved, first by a gallant stand of

MISMANAGEMENT OF THE CRIMEAN CAMPAIGN

defeat for the Russians, but its cost was enormous. The allied casualties were over four thousand three hundred; the Russian losses have been reckoned at over ten thousand.

Once again the victory was not followed up, but with the scanty and mutilated forces at their disposal the allied commanders may have been wise in deciding not to pursue even a beaten and demoralized enemy. Lord Raglan, the British commander-in-chief, was not of this opinion. He wished to push home the victory, and was only deterred from doing so by the positive refusal of Canrobert, the French commander-in-chief, to take part in the enterprise.

Allied Commanders' Differences

Rumours had already reached home that all was not well in the Crimea. Raglan was no genius, and he was an old man, already stricken with illness which he strove bravely to conceal. But he was a man of competence and common sense, and if he had been faithfully served he might have done creditably well. The successive French commanders, hampered by the orders of the emperor, who wanted victories without casualties, and mistakenly believed that he understood the art of war, were a constant check upon Raglan's enterprise, and he was morbidly anxious not to annoy them. Moreover, during nearly forty years of peace, broken only by expeditions which, however important in themselves, can only be regarded as child's play in comparison with a great European war, the British army had been inclined to rest upon its laurels. The drill-book had become stereotyped and generalship had rusted. The barrack-square soldiers, surprised by the realities of war, were filled with dumb resentment when the rules of a lifetime had to be sacrificed to the need for victory. There is a story told of a cavalryman, wounded at Balaklava, who was asked how he got his wound. "When I met the Rooshian," he explained in terms of the drill-book, "I gave him cut 2, and instead of guarding with 3, he cut 1 at me, and of course he wounded me, silly fool!"*

* Sir Robert Baden-Powell's *Indian Memories*, p. 271.

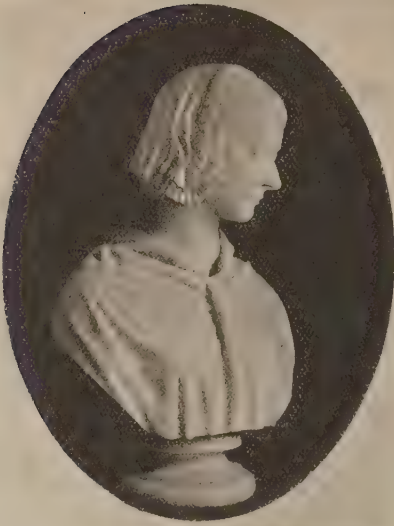
The story may be no more than a pleasant invention, but it is some index to the puzzled minds of general officers as well as of their men.

Incompetent Administration

If the art of war had been neglected, organization had decayed, and faults which had been glaring during the Peninsular War had grown more dangerous with time. No one office was responsible for the whole administration of the army. There was still only one secretary of State for both war and the colonies when war was already upon us. The office was then divided, which was good; but the experienced staff was left to the colonial secretary, and a new one improvised for the war office, which was bad; and worse, the Duke of Newcastle, whose administrative abilities, if less feeble than has been sometimes represented, were certainly not those of a competent war minister, insisted on keeping the war office and giving up colonial affairs. Thus the worst was made of a wise administrative reform. Important administrative functions also belonged to the commander-in-chief, who had a separate office at the Horse Guards. Other matters again, concerned chiefly with finance, were in the hands of the secretary at war, who was nominally subordinate to the commander-in-chief, and was in the cabinet, while the commander-in-chief was not. Artillery supplies were controlled by the ordnance, under yet another political chief. This does not exhaust the list of offices concerned in the conduct of military operations. It is doubtful whether anyone then or since ever fully penetrated all the intricacies of the system, or want of system. But it will be clear that the area of possible misunderstanding, confusion and mistakes was immense, and that nothing short of a succession of miracles could have prevented a crop of disastrous blunders.

Some miracles must have happened, or disasters would have been more numerous and more decisive than they were; and they were numerous enough. First, the primitive arrangements for the care of the sick and wounded utterly broke down.

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FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

The bust paid for by the pennies of the soldiers.

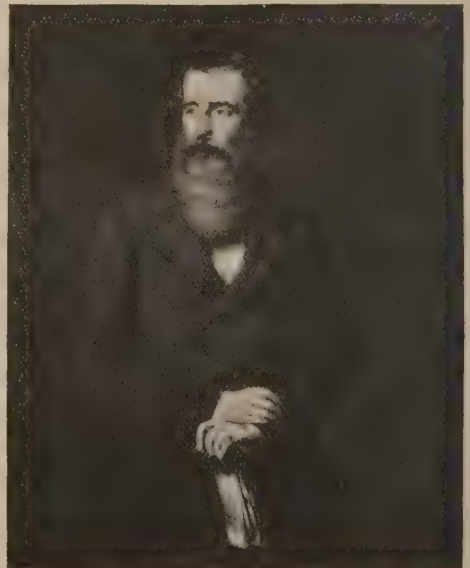
From the Marble Bust by Sir John Steell, R.S.A., in the Royal United Service Museum, Whitehall.

Miss Florence Nightingale, who possessed not merely knowledge and experience of nursing but exceptional organizing powers, went out at the request of Sidney Herbert, with thirty-seven nurses, to grapple with the worst problems of her craft in conditions where hygiene and scientific method had hitherto been ignored. She met with almost as much difficulty from the officers and the army medical service (though there were honourable and distinguished exceptions) as she did from want of stores and equipment, or from Turkish indifference to cleanliness, pure water or efficient drainage. In spite of all opposition, Florence Nightingale effected a revolution in nursing, and saved countless lives. That she was difficult to work with and an exacting task-mistress can scarcely be denied, but still less can it be forgotten that in modern warfare hygiene and hospitals rank among the essentials of victory, and that in military efficiency as well as in humanity Florence Nightingale was therefore a reformer and a pioneer.*

Until Balaklava and Inkerman the troops

* See the *Life of Florence Nightingale*, by Sir E. T. Cook.

had been well fed. But at Balaklava the Russians gained ground which commanded a road essential to the proper movement of supplies. As a consequence, food, stores, and ammunition had to be moved up to the troops along a cart-track deep in mire, and the men were fed and equipped irregularly. Still more disastrous, there occurred, nine days after Inkerman, a terrible storm, in which tents and equipment were destroyed, and transports used as store-ships were either sunk or damaged. Provisions were thereafter inadequate, and many things urgently required were altogether lacking. Moreover, in this country it is much safer to murder wholesale than retail. Contractors were guilty of almost unbelievable crimes in sending out bad, unsuitable and insufficiently prepared stores. Adequate preparations had not been made for a winter campaign. Appropriate clothes, food and shelter to protect the men against the rigours of a Crimean winter were therefore wanting. Even the Russians themselves suffered terribly from the weather, and the allied troops as a whole endured fearful hardships from exposure and neglect. To the British



DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

From the Engraving in the British Museum, by G. Zobel, after the Painting by J. W. Gordon.

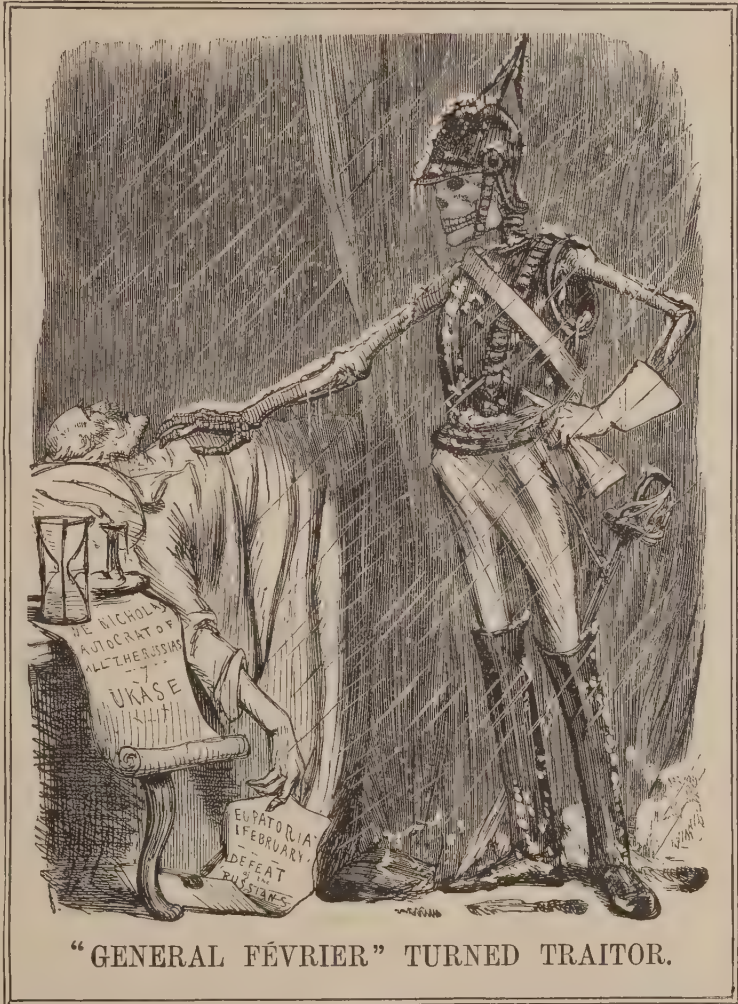
GLADSTONE'S DEFENCE OF THE MINISTRY

insufficient or improper food, inadequate clothing, and lack of medical comforts and precautions proved more terrible than the horrors of battle.

When it was realized in England that men were dying in the Crimea for want of food and clothes, of nurses, doctors and medicine, the nation turned in wrath upon the ministry and demanded an investigation into the mismanagement which made such horrors possible. John Arthur Roebuck, a bellicose Radical, gave notice in the House of Commons (January 25th, 1855) of a motion calling for an inquiry into the conduct of the war. Without consulting his colleagues, Lord John Russell resigned rather than resist the motion. For once Lord John's constitutional sense had deserted him. The constitutional doctrine is that ministers

are collectively responsible for their conduct. Russell was responsible along with the rest; yet when the prisoners were placed in the dock he coolly jumped out of it and sought to evade responsibility. After

discussion the cabinet resigned. The queen asked ministers to remain, and, with Palmerston as leader in the Commons, they resumed



Tsar Nicholas I died March 2nd, 1855. He had said: "Russia has two generals in whom she can confide—Generals Janvier and Février."

From the Cartoon by John Leech in "Punch," March 10th, 1855, by permission of the Proprietors.

office and resisted Roebuck's motion. It was Gladstone who made the real reply to Roebuck, for there was a strong case against the government on the ground of its administrative failures. "Your inquiry," he told

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the ministry's accusers, "will never take place as a real inquiry; or, if it did, it would lead to nothing but confusion and disturbance, increased disasters, shame at home, and weakness abroad; it would convey no consolation to those whom you seek to aid, but it would carry malignant joy to the hearts of the enemies of England." The inquiry, he declared, would be "useless and mischievous," even for the purpose for which it was designed.

Palmerston Reconstructs the Ministry

Argument was useless in face of a determined House of Commons. The ministry was defeated by more than two votes to one (325-148), and resigned. Derby, Lansdowne, and Russell, each in turn, tried to form a ministry, and failed. Russell was more surprised than anybody; not one of his old colleagues would now help him. At last Palmerston attempted to reconstruct the old ministry. Public criticism had been directed mainly against Aberdeen and Newcastle, the minister for war. Palmerston's idea was that the coalition should continue under his leadership, Aberdeen retiring, and Newcastle being thrown overboard as the Jonah of the old cabinet.

The Peelites hesitated; "first they said they wouldn't, then they said they couldn't, then they said again they'd try." Unfortunately the course of action to be taken in regard to Roebuck's motion was not clearly settled between them and the new prime minister before they took office. The Peelites thought that Palmerston would resist immediate inquiry. That he could safely have done so admits of no doubt. Everybody was agreed that the war must be carried on with vigour, and most men agreed that Palmerston was the man to direct it. Every other possible prime minister had tried to form or to carry on a ministry and had failed. Palmerston was the necessary man. "The whole country," as Derby had openly confessed to the queen, "cried out for Lord Palmerston as the only man fit for carrying on the war with success." Palmerston was, therefore, master in the house and in the country, and could have done as he pleased. He had

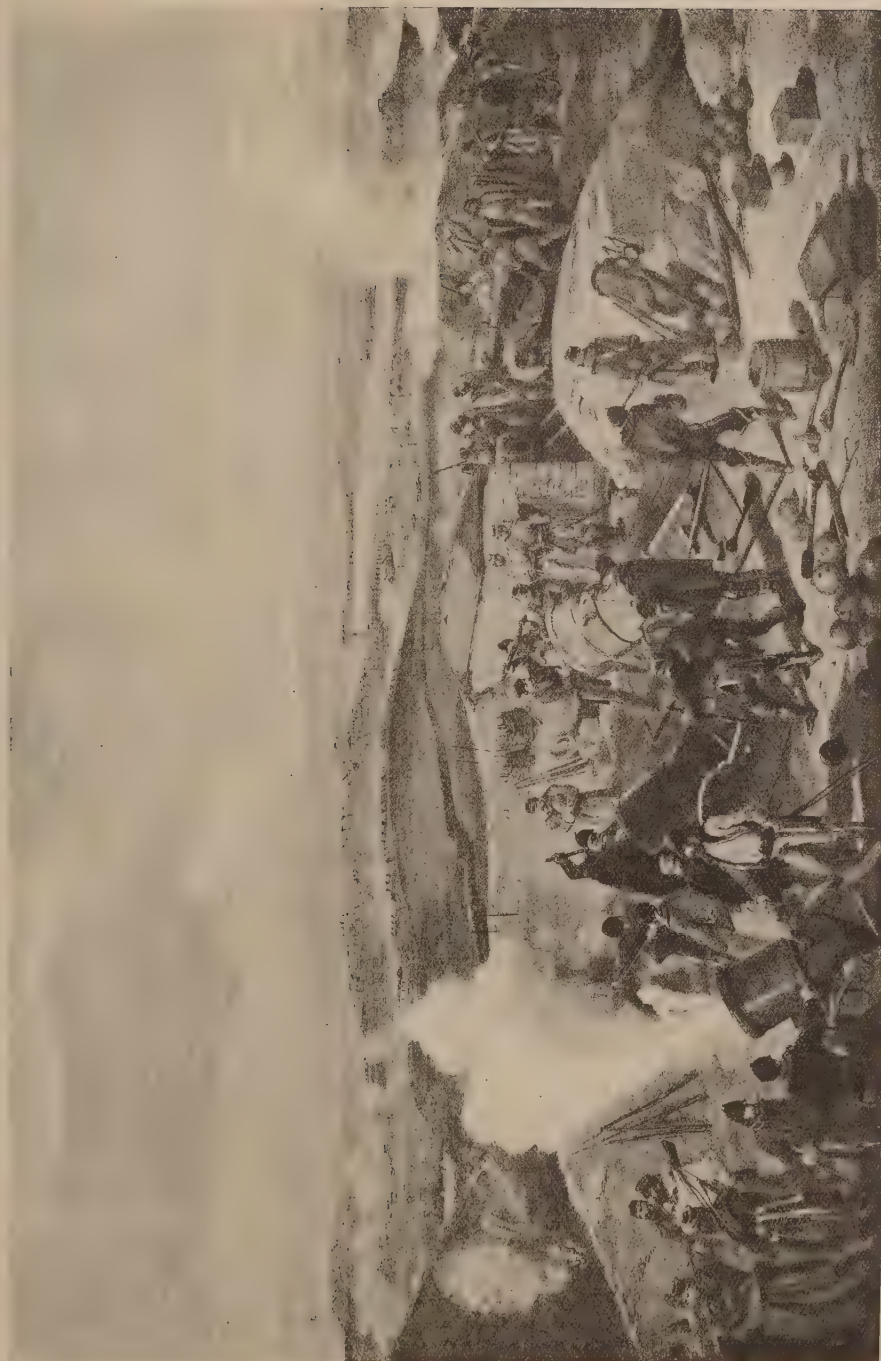
joined his colleagues in resisting the inquiry as incompatible with the working of cabinet government, and his course should have been clear.

But the boldest have their moments of weakness, and Palmerston yielded to the wishes of the house. He accepted the investigation proposed by Roebuck, whereupon the leading Peelites, with more consistency than the prime minister, instantly resigned. Gladstone, Graham and Sidney Herbert were followed into retirement by men like Cardwell, though Argyll and Canning remained in office. If the Peelites showed deficient sense of proportion, it has to be remembered that they had long-standing reasons for distrust of Palmerston; and if Palmerston was inconsistent he showed himself a master of tactics. He had flung the parliamentary malcontents a bone to worry, and it was an insurance for ministerial peace. And, as Gladstone had predicted, the inquiry was no real inquiry. It carried on its investigation for three months, and then, rejecting the proposals of its chairman, it adopted a tame and colourless report.

The Inefficiency of Panmure

Palmerston's ministry was, then, in the main a Whig ministry. It brought little new ability to the task of conducting war. The chief French historian of this period has given a glowing testimonial for its successful efforts. But it has to be remembered that the ministry was not firmly fixed in the saddle till the end of February, and that the war had then little more than six months to run. Before it took office many lessons had been learnt, and most of the administrative achievements of the summer of 1855 must have been the work of its predecessors. Even, apart from this, the notion that the Palmerston cabinet was more efficient than the ministry of Lord Aberdeen, save possibly, though not certainly, in the decision and driving power of its chief, will not bear investigation. Fox-Maule (Lord Panmure), who was sent to the war office, was a feeble creature, as undecided, as self-satisfied and as inefficient as Newcastle himself.

Panmure, unhappily for his reputation,



BOMBARDMENT OF SEBASTOPOL

From an Engraving (after the contemporary Drawing by William Simpson) lent by T. H. Parker Bros.

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is condemned out of his own published papers. Palmerston was constantly, and often vainly, prodding him into the semblance of activity. He was almost incapable of coming to a big decision, and when he did make a decision of importance he generally decided wrongly. He could not make up his mind about the chief command. There were men in the army who were capable of replacing Raglan. Sir Charles Napier was in India, but Sir Colin Campbell was in the Crimea. Yet Panmure could decide neither to supersede Raglan nor to give him his confidence. He sent out General Simpson to act as Raglan's chief of staff. When Raglan died (June 25th), Simpson succeeded to the command, and it seemed as if the problem had settled itself. Now Raglan, though no strategist and little of a tactician, was a real man and a real soldier. Simpson had none of his qualities and more than all of his defects. His letters to Panmure are those of a terrified and unhappy old maid. In November Simpson was allowed to retire, and he was replaced by Codrington, whom Panmure ought to have recalled in June instead of promoting in November. Changes in other commands, though perhaps needed, were in the same way usually robbed of their usefulness by the appointment of men less competent than those replaced. In sum, while we may have had war ministers as bad as Panmure, it is almost inconceivable that we can ever have had a worse, for incompetence and indecision were not even redeemed by the saving grace of loyalty to the commanders in the field, and Panmure insulted the men whom he had not the courage to recall.

Negotiations for Peace

Some of Palmerston's own energy had been devoted to an attempt to secure peace. Desultory negotiations had, in fact, been going on at Vienna since the previous autumn. Discussion turned upon four points, namely: (1) the protectorate over the principalities and Serbia, which it was proposed to make a matter not of Russian but of European guarantee; (2) free navigation of the Danube; (3) reduction of Russian naval power in the Black Sea;

(4) European protection of the Christian populations of Turkey. Palmerston then sent Lord John Russell, who had refused office but was willing to accept a diplomatic mission, as a special envoy to Vienna, and it seemed as if there might be some chance of success. On three of the four points agreement was not impossible; but on one of them, the third, Russia would not give way. Hopes of peace brightened when Nicholas died (on March 2nd, 1855), but his successor, Alexander II, thought that the third point touched the honour of Russia and of himself, and negotiations broke down. Russell, who had meantime accepted office under Palmerston, was compelled to resign when it became known that he had supported a compromise on the Black Sea question proposed by Austria. The nation was not yet ready to insist upon peace.

The Treaty of Paris

Meanwhile the siege of Sebastopol dragged wearily on. The French had at last got a competent general, Pélissier, who had the courage to resist the emperor's interference, and, in spite of repeated blunders, some effective steps were taken against the Russian position. In January the kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont had joined the allies, and in May a Piedmontese army under La Marmora reinforced them in the Crimea. In September, two days before Simpson's resignation, Sebastopol surrendered (September 9th, 1855). The war went on a little longer, but the allies were weary of the struggle and Russia was exhausted. In England the Manchester men were now reinforced by the Peelites in their demand for peace; Gladstone and his friends were not prepared to support a continuance of the war for the sake of a form of words as to Russian naval strength in the Black Sea, when they thought that honour could be satisfied. In Russia the Tsar Alexander II was anxious for peace.

On February 25th a congress of the interested powers, the allies and Russia, with Prussia and Austria, met in Paris. Less than five weeks later (March 30th) the Treaty of Paris was signed. It recognized the independence and territorial integrity of

EFFECTS OF THE TREATY OF PARIS

Turkey, an empty phrase inconsistent with other provisions of the treaty. Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as Servia, secured complete local self-government under their own princes, with the right to maintain national armies and establish representative institutions, but subject to the suzerainty of Turkey, though under the guarantee, not of Russia alone, but of all the contracting powers. The Danube was declared a free river, a sort of international highway. For the time, Russian influence in Turkish domestic politics disappeared, and Russia was humiliated by the neutralization of the Black Sea, the much-debated third point of Vienna. The arrangement was that the Dardanelles should be closed to warships, and that both Russia and Turkey should agree to maintain neither arsenal nor ship of war on the Black Sea. This was a blow to Russian pride, but to pride alone. The agreement lasted just as long as Russia was prepared to tolerate it or remained too weak to break it, but no longer. So far as the allies were concerned, it might well be thought that their victory was barren.

The War—and After

At the same time it is only fair to say that another view of the Russian War is possible and is strongly held. It amounts to saying that instinct was stronger than reason; that the war was not the mere "vesting quarrel," or the vain struggle which is its traditional character in British history, and that support of Turkey was only a nominal, or almost an incidental, element in the conflict. The war, it is said, marked the clash of forces which were fundamentally antagonistic, and issued in victory for the progressive forces. It made possible a Europe in which Italy could be united and free, and Germany at any rate united. There were many blunders on both sides. France and England did not always fight for the right reasons. Many of their fears were groundless. But the struggle between the liberal West and the absolutist East represents an instinctive antagonism. Its ultimate wisdom must not be disguised by the petty nature of its ostensible causes, nor by the fact that on

particular points the allies were wrong. In reality it reversed the verdict given at Olmütz and Novara against the aspirations of Germany and Italy. It weakened Russia. It kicked away the diplomatic props which sustained Austria, for Austria had pleased nobody and found herself isolated. Diplomats, of course, cannot claim much credit when right results issue from wrong policy. But they were moved by forces which were stronger than themselves or their pleadings—the sound political instincts of the western states.

These arguments gain some support from the results of the congress of Paris and from the course of subsequent events. If anything was gained from the contest by anyone it was gained by Italy. Piedmont had engaged in a quarrel in which she had no direct interest or concern, but she had gained the friendship of Napoleon III and the right to a voice in the congress of Europe. At Paris she had taken her opportunity to make known the wrongs of Italy. Austria could no longer count upon the same Russian help as of yore, even if Russia had possessed the strength to give it; she had lost a firm friend without gaining support elsewhere. And a few months later, when the British foreign office denounced the misgovernment of Naples, a humbled Russia could offer no more than an empty protest.*

Palmerston's Appeal to the Country

Palmerston owed his power to the war. the country had not been happy till it got him. But peace put an end to his immunity from attack, and his position grew weaker. It looked, for a moment, as if he would be overthrown on the budget of 1857. The chancellor of the exchequer had committed himself to several economic heresies, and Gladstone supported a hostile motion put forward by Disraeli. Perhaps the attack was too vehement, or Gladstone's scent for economic heresy thought to be too keen, for, to the surprise of the house itself, ministers held their own by a majority of eighty. Palmerston was then led into a worse scrape by a subordinate in the East.

* See, for instance, Lord Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, i, 98-9.

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Sir John Bowring, Benthamite, member of the Peace Society, author of the hymn "In the cross of Christ I glory," and a knowledgeable man on economic questions in Europe, was the British agent at Hong Kong. He embarked upon a quarrel with the Chinese, in which he was in the wrong. But Palmerston upheld Bowring against the combined attacks of Conservatives and



SIR JOHN BOWRING

From the Painting by J. King, in the National Portrait Gallery.

Cobdenites, reinforced by Gladstone and John Russell. He was defeated by a narrow majority (sixteen only), but he believed that the Chinese quarrel would be popular, and instead of resigning he appealed to the country.

The election that followed was, really, an invitation to accord a personal vote of confidence in the prime minister. Palmerston had no clear policy, and it was hard to distinguish between the views of his supporters and the views of Derby's. Disraeli might make fun of the "Liberal" programme, "No reform! New taxes! Canton blazing! Persia invaded!"—but the difference between Palmerston and Derby was one not of principle but of personality. "The two

sides of the house," said Cobden, "no longer represent opposing parties—unless, indeed, it may be said that our leader is at heart an aristocratic Tory, while the chief of the opposition (Disraeli) is, if anything, a democratic Radical." He thought that some Tories put more trust in Palmerston than they did in Disraeli. Certain it is that opponents of Palmerston, including those on his own side of the house who had opposed the Crimean War or spoken too early for peace, fared ill at the polls, and he returned with a large and compact majority. With the exception of a short break in 1858, Palmerston's ascendancy lasted the rest of his life.

His ministry stood the shock of the Indian Mutiny. It even gained some credit from the happy accident that troops on the way to China could be diverted to India, and bad policy was justified unexpectedly by promoting good results. In domestic matters Palmerston was not always so fortunate. Yet by paying lip service to parliamentary reform he adroitly postponed it, the annoyance to a section of his supporters being balanced by the approval of opponents. The Divorce and Probate Acts of 1857, though hotly opposed by Gladstone and other High Churchmen, were popular reforms; they put an end to a system by which bigamy was manufactured among the poor, while only a rich husband (and in rare instances a rich wife) might by complicated and expensive processes obtain a divorce for which there was theoretically no legal provision.

Palmerston's position was temporarily shaken by events over which he had no control. He might, it is true, have avoided the discredit which arose from the appointment as lord privy seal of Lord Clanricarde, whose reputation was none of the sweetest; but the financial strain of 1857 was due to a commercial crisis in the United States. There was a succession of bank failures, such as that of the Liverpool Borough Bank, and financial panic reacted, as it usually does, upon the ministry of the day.

Then came Orsini's attempt to assassinate Napoleon III. The emperor escaped, but it proved on investigation that the assassin's

FALL OF PALMERSTON

bomb had been made in England. France called upon England to take steps to prevent the hatching of such plots. Addresses to the emperor, from the French army, published in the official *Moniteur*, referred to London as an "assassins' den," and prayed that the army might be allowed to root it out. On both sides of the Channel there was great excitement. Palmerston yielded to French importunity and introduced the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, designed to strengthen the law by making conspiracy to murder a felony punishable by imprisonment for life. The bill was much disliked. The very sentiments which Palmerston had done so much to foster—that John Bullishness and that scornful independence of foreign interference upon which his own popularity was founded—were roused by the appearance of French dictation. The Radicals, too, disliked the

bill. England had always been proud of its record as an asylum for the exiled patriot and the liberal refugee, and of its reputation for a catholic hospitality by which Napoleon had himself long profited. They feared that the bill might be made the means of oppression to constitutional reformers from foreign states whose opinions differed little from their own, and who, having no sympathy with assassins, might yet be harried whenever a foreign despot chose to press an English ministry to treat them as conspirators. The very outcry against the bill may perhaps be taken to show that this danger was much exaggerated.

Two of the Manchester men, Milner Gibson and Bright, carried an amendment against the ministry, and the cabinet resigned. Politically, Palmerston had lived to brag; by the irony of circumstances, he fell because he truckled.



ORSINI'S ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE NAPOLEON III, JANUARY 14, 1858

From a Drawing by L. Gunnis.



KABUL IN 1839

From a Lithograph in Sir K. A. Jackson's contemporary "Sketches in Afghanistan."

CHAPTER XVII

GROWTH OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA, AND "THE DESPERATE TEMPEST OF THE MUTINIES" (1813-58)

IN the growth of British responsibility for the peoples of India the year 1813 is a landmark. It stands midway between North's Regulating Act (1773) and the last renewal of John Company's charter (1853), and it is a landmark for three main reasons. First, the trading monopoly of the East India Company was broken. The company continued to monopolize the trade with China, but traffic with India was thrown open by the new charter (1813) to private enterprise.* Secondly, British administration was definitely cleared of the suspicions—often unjust—which had rested upon it in an earlier day, and was pronounced to

have provided India with a domestic administration "just in its principles" and exercised with "integrity and ability."† Thirdly, after the period of quietness and concentration which had followed the administration of Wellesley, the company was once more compelled, sorely against its will, to advance the boundaries of its dominion.

Before the close of his governor-generalship, Minto, the apostle of quiescence, had been driven reluctantly to the opinion that non-intervention in native affairs was false policy. His successor, Lord Moira, better known by his later title of Marquess of Hastings, soon convinced himself that the

* As from April 10th, 1814; 53 Geo. III, c. 155, §§ 6-7. The company retained entire its monopoly of the trade in tea.

† *Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons*, 1812. The words quoted are given in Muir's *Making of British India*, pp. 255-6.

THE VIGOROUS ADMINISTRATION OF HASTINGS

responsibilities already undertaken could not be adequately discharged unless the British were prepared to add to them. Hastings was a soldier of repute, but hitherto undistinguished in peace. The most respectable of the regent's intimates, he was regal, grandiloquent and picturesque, but his affectations concealed a hard core of genuine ability. He was the very man to revive the vigorous traditions of Wellesley and to handle Indian problems with the judicious firmness which the times required. "Were we to be feeble," he said in 1815, "our rule would be a dream, and a very short one."

When Hastings reached India in October, 1813, he found that he had inherited from the pacific Minto a frontier quarrel with the Gurkha warriors of Nepal, who provoked war by pushing downwards towards the Ganges valley. Hastings acted with vigour. Although at first unfortunate, he soon succeeded, by a series of skilful operations, in defeating the Gurkhas, and compelled them to surrender a part of their territories. Once the security of the northern frontier was assured, Hastings did not treat the conquered enemy ungenerously. By a judicious blending of firmness and concession he was able to lay the foundations of stable friendship between the British and Nepal.

Pathans and Pindaris

A more serious struggle was yet to come. Parts of India were infested by bands of freebooters called "Pindaris." These roving bandits, mostly light-horsemen, swooped down upon defenceless villages, plundering and destroying wherever they passed. Better organized and more fully equipped were the companies of Pathans who sometimes acted independently and sometimes in collusion with the Pindaris. The chief difference between the two classes of raiders seems to have been that whilst the Pindaris plundered individuals or villages, the Pathans blackmailed princes, taking their money or fighting their battles, whichever promised the greater profit. Behind these two dangerous forces was the more formidable power of the Mahrattas, who occasionally employed the Pathans and the Pindaris to pull their chestnuts out of the fire.

The Mahrattas, humbled by Wellesley, had not altogether abandoned their dream of restoring a Hindu empire in India. If the British became involved in war with the freebooters, the Mahrattas were sure to seize the opportunity to make a new bid for power. Hastings the statesman would have boldly seized the nettle and attacked the Mahrattas; Hastings the head of a trading company was forced for a time to hold his hand. But in December, 1816, it was at last decided that the bandits must be rooted out, and a campaign was planned to encircle them. This precipitated an attempt, prepared by the Mahratta chiefs in secret, to attack the British and drive them out of India.

Break-up of the Mahrattas

Of the confused operations which followed it must suffice to say that the preparations of Hastings had been thorough and that his dispositions were skilful. The Pindari bands were shattered. Amir Khan, the leader of the Pathans, while allowed to retain certain territories, was deprived of troops and artillery. The Mahratta chiefs were compelled to accept terms dictated by Hastings. Sindhia had, fortunately for himself, been isolated at an early stage of the conflict. He retained considerable independence, although his political acts were henceforth controlled by the British. Holkar was compelled to accept a subsidiary alliance. The bhonsla was deposed, and his successor was forced to accept the same terms as Holkar. But the peshwa, the nominal head of the confederacy and the chief promoter of conflict, was deprived of his territory and sent into obscure retirement with the consolation of a generous pension. Part of his lands was brought under direct British rule, and the remainder formed into a new native state under a raja of the dynasty which the Mahrattas had dispossessed. Native administration was thus preserved, but the Mahratta rulers were henceforth guided by British residents and had little power to disturb the peace of India. Many minor independent princes, especially in Rajputana, now placed themselves under British protection, and Britain found itself the paramount power in Central India.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Hastings won no more gratitude from the directors of the East India Company than Wellesley or Warren Hastings before him. Irritated by criticism from home, he resigned in 1822, and left India on New Year's Day, 1823.* None of his five successors, though able men, left so distinctive a mark upon India. They were engaged, on the one hand, in problems of domestic re-



EARL AMHERST

From the Painting after A. W. Davis, in the National Portrait Gallery.

form and development, and, on the other, in the unending search for that perfect frontier which, like the *Earthly Paradise* of Morris's Wanderers, seemed ever to recede from view. Earl Amherst (1823-28), provoked by Burmese attacks upon border tribes under British protection, was even led beyond the frontiers of India to invade Burma. The war was not glorious, but it won for us (1826) the control of Assam and the possession of a long strip of territory commanding the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal. Bentinck (1828-35) was no expansionist, yet he assumed the direct administration of Mysore, and by agreement with its people

* But for the death of Castlereagh the successor of Hastings would have been George Canning.

he acquired Manipur, which had hitherto been a protectorate.

More serious problems soon arose on the north-western frontier. When the boundaries of British authority were extended to the Sutlej and the Indus we came into contact with the Amirs of Sind and with the Sikh power in the Punjab. Beyond lay the great mountain mass of Afghanistan, "the pivot of Asia," and it became an article of British policy that no hostile influence should be allowed to prevail there. Auckland (1837-42) shared Palmerston's dread of Russian aggression. After a period of rapid expansion in Central Asia, Russia had established, in 1828, a preponderant influence in Persia. Persia, in its turn, pressed upon the semi-independent region of Afghanistan round about Herat. This was taken to be a cover for Russian designs on Afghanistan, and the suspicion was confirmed by the supposed cordiality with which a Russian mission was received at Kabul. If Russia were allowed to establish a dominant influence over the Afghans she would hold the keys of the Indian border; and, just as Palmerston insisted on the integrity of Turkey, Auckland was determined to maintain Afghanistan as a buffer against Russian aggression.†

It is not clear that Dost Mohammed, the Amir of Afghanistan, was hostile to the British, though he jealously guarded his independence. Auckland mistrusted him, and thought him too ready to listen to Russian agents. He determined to replace him by a ruler amenable to British influence who would turn a deaf ear to Russian blandishments. Auckland was warned that it was easier to get into Afghanistan than out of it. He gave no heed. Forces were sent to depose Dost Mohammed, and (1839) they restored Shah Shuja, a dethroned shah of the old Durani line.‡ This feeble British

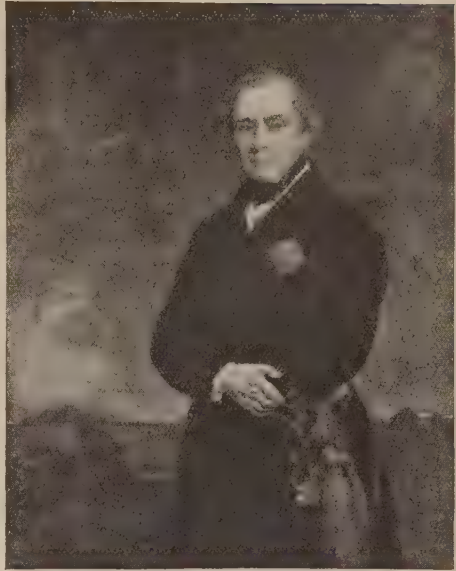
† Discussions of the relative responsibility of Auckland and his "English masters" for the Afghan War (e.g. Rice Holmes, *Indian Mutiny*, App. A) are unprofitable. The policy of the foreign office and of the government of India cannot be satisfactorily considered in isolation.

‡ One of the "large assortment of Pretenders" (says Auckland's sister, the witty Miss Eden) whom we kept "in store" for emergencies.—*Miss Eden's Letters*, p. 302. (These letters deal little with politics, but they convey a lively impression of official India in Auckland's time, pp. 262-368.)

ANNEXATION OF SIND

dependant could not long hold the turbulent mountaineers of Afghanistan in leash. Led by Dost Mohammed's son, Akbar, the Afghans revolted and made themselves masters of Kabul. The British forces there, too weak either to withdraw in safety or to hold their ground, were caught in a trap. They attempted to escape from it by retreating under a safe-conduct from Akbar. But Akbar's promise was worthless. Only one member of the retreating force survived; the rest were butchered by Afghans or died amidst the snows.

This disaster lowered British prestige in India. Ellenborough (1842-4), an able man though too fond of pomp and rhetoric, attempted to retrieve what Auckland had lost, by reinforcing the troops in other parts of Afghanistan and ordering a theatrical retreat "via Kabul." In 1843 Akbar was defeated, Kabul reoccupied, and the British prisoners and hostages rescued. Then came the paradox of a triumphant retreat. Dost Mohammed was restored, and when he died in 1863 was master of an enlarged and consolidated Afghan kingdom. This was a



VISCOUNT HARDINGE OF LAHORE

From the Painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

strange victory that issued in the restoration of the very ruler for whose overthrow the war had been undertaken. It was partly to restore British prestige that Ellenborough made war upon the amirs of Sind, who ruled over the country which commanded the lower waters of the Indus. The amirs had misgoverned their subjects and had not been strictly faithful to their treaty obligations, but the attack upon them was ill justified. The amirs were conquered, however, and Sind was annexed. The annexation was convenient because it enabled us to control the mouth of the Indus, but it made India restless and aroused great indignation in England. Ellenborough, with his bombast and his painted elephants, had made everyone uneasy, and in 1844 he was recalled.

Hardinge (1844-8), a Peninsular veteran and a statesman of the school of Peel, strove hard for peace. But the aggressive policy of Auckland and Ellenborough had spread distrust throughout India. Most of all it had alarmed the Sikhs, the Hindu sect whose powerful military organization—the Khalsa—had enabled it to master the



EARL OF ELLENBOROUGH

From the Painting by F. R. Sny, in the National Portrait Gallery.

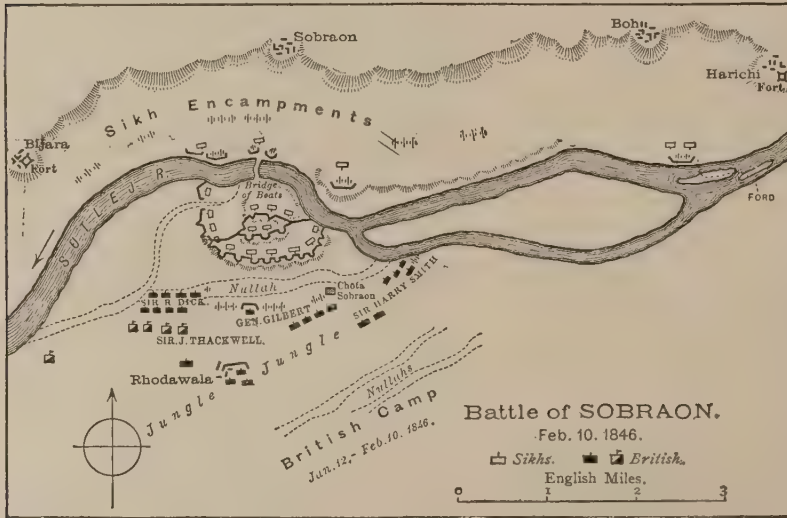
HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Punjab. After the annexation of Sind, the Sikhs were hemmed in between the British power and their hereditary Afghan enemies. Convinced that they would soon be attacked like the Amirs of Sind, and persuaded, since the Afghan war, that British military power was on the wane, the Sikhs determined to strike the first blow. Early in December, 1845, their army crossed the Sutlej. Before the month was out it had been defeated

Punjab. But the civil administration of the Sikhs was feeble. Distracted by feuds, their political chiefs could neither control the military caste nor restrain their soldiery from plundering. Hardinge was therefore obliged to take what securities he could obtain for peace and public order. His settlement was a compromise. The Sikhs surrendered to the British a strip of territory between the Beas and the Sutlej, but

retained possession of the Punjab, subject to conditions which placed their government under British control.

Henry Lawrence was sent to Lahore as British resident, and exercised, on behalf of the child maharaja, almost the authority of a dictator. He curbed



in two pitched battles, Aliwal and Ferozeshah, and driven back across the river. But the army was quickly reorganized, and in January, 1846, was able to recross the Sutlej. On February 10th, in the decisive battle of Sobraon, the position of the Sikhs, who had wedged themselves between their own earthworks and the river over which they must retreat if defeated, was taken by storm and the Sikh army was shattered.*

Hardinge had been reluctant to fight the Sikhs; he was equally unwilling to annex the Punjab, for he wished neither to extend the bounds of British dominion nor to draw closer to Afghanistan, and he lacked the forces necessary to make direct British authority a reality over the vast area of the

the military caste and won the confidence of a people grateful for the skilled administration which brought order out of anarchy and substituted peace and security for turbulence and strife.

Henry Lawrence's authority was founded, in the main, upon his personal influence. When he returned for a time to England (1848) there was nobody who could exactly fill his place. Soon the Punjab was throbbing with agitation and the Sikhs were eager once more to challenge the British power. Hardinge had assured his successor, Dalhousie (1848-56), that "it would not be necessary to fire a gun in India for years to come," but the necessity arose almost at once. Fortunately, Dalhousie was a strong man, comparable amongst the British rulers of India to Wellesley and Warren Hastings. Schooled by Peel, he was already an ad-

* For a discussion of this campaign and of the criticisms on Gough, the commander-in-chief, see Rait, *Life of Gough*, vol. ii, chapters 4 and 5.

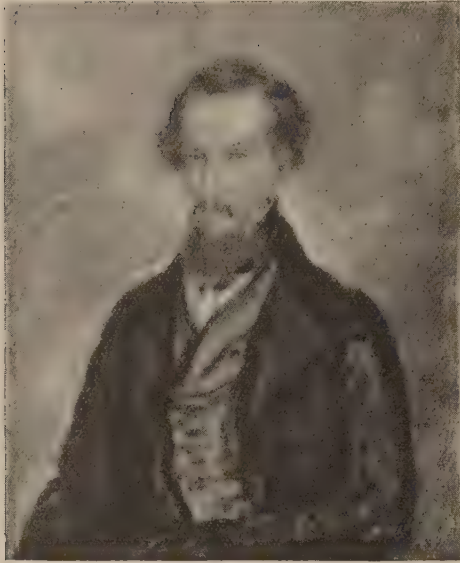


BATTLE OF ALIWAL, JANUARY 28, 1846

Charge of the 16th (Queen's Own) Lancers.

From an Engraving (after a contemporary Drawing by M. A. Hoyer) lent by T. H. Parker Bros.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



SIR HENRY LAWRENCE

From a Miniature by a native Indian artist, in the National Portrait Gallery.

ministrator of the first rank; the expansion of British power presented no terrors to him.

Dalhousie was scarcely in the saddle when the second Sikh war began. In April, 1848, the discontented Sikh governors of Multan abetted a rising in which two British officers were murdered. Before Currie, the resident at Lahore ("the Rosy One" of John Nicholson's sarcasms), had awakened from over-confidence, the Sikhs had proclaimed a holy war against the British. It was not until November, 1848, that the main British campaign began. At first it went badly. When General Gough met the Sikhs in a pitched battle at Chilianwala in January, 1849, the issue was doubtful and the losses were enormous. But at the less costly battle of Gujerat, in February, the army of the Khalsa was defeated and scattered.* This time there was no compromise—the Punjab was annexed, the Khalsa was broken up, and the Sikhs were disarmed. Under a board† responsible to the governor-general there was established a sound system of adminis-

* For a discussion of the campaign, see Rait, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, chapters 10–13.

† The brothers Henry and John Lawrence, with a colleague, formed the board.

tration, finance and justice, and in a short time the Punjab became a model province.

Dalhousie seldom shrank from annexation when circumstances favoured it. In December, 1852, he annexed Lower Burma, after a rapid and well-organized campaign against the Burmese government, whose numerous misdeeds had culminated in outrageous treatment of some British merchants at Rangoon. Dalhousie also accepted any favourable opportunity of bringing native principalities under direct British control. Many British rulers of India have been reluctant to dispossess native princes, preferring that they should retain responsibility for internal affairs whenever possible, so long as their military and political activities were under the supervision of the paramount power. Dalhousie held that it was sounder policy to consolidate the government of the country by annexing Indian states as opportunities arose. He found one such opportunity in the application of the "doctrine of lapse." By Indian custom the heirless man may adopt a son and thereby confer upon him full rights of succession. The validity of this rule is less certain in regard to sovereignty than property, but the government of India had generally accepted the adopted heir of an Indian ruler as the legitimate successor, unless there had been grave reason for refusing to recognize him. Dalhousie held that in case of a failure of heirs the rights of sovereignty did not pass to an adopted son but lapsed to the suzerain power, and that it would, in general, be wrong to refuse such an opportunity of annexation.

This "doctrine of lapse" seems to have been sound in law, though the expediency of insisting upon it is more questionable. Dalhousie nevertheless enforced his doctrine in several instances. In 1849 he annexed Sattara, whose raja had adopted a son after permission had been refused by the British. Jhansi, where the raja had also adopted a son without sanction, was annexed in 1853. Both these states were fragments of what had once been the peshwa's dominions; Sattara had been created by the British after the peshwa's defeat, and Jhansi owed its independence to his fall. Nagpur, annexed

ANNEXATION OF OUDH

in 1853, was one of the greater Mahratta states. Its ruler had died without an heir, without an adopted son, and without any near relative fit to succeed him. Here Dalhousie thought that his course was clear, yet the annexation was a sharp blow to Mahratta pride and caused alarm in other Mahratta states. This doctrine of lapse was enforced in other cases, but these three were the most striking instances of it and did much to spread uneasiness throughout the principalities of India.*

In applying the doctrine of lapse, Dalhousie was only carrying out rules laid down by the company (1834) in the time of the pacific Bentinck; he did not originate the policy, but he enforced it with unprecedented vigour. Possibly it would have excited less alarm if the kingdom of Oudh had not been annexed (February, 1856). This had nothing to do with "lapse," but was due to sheer misgovernment, and the annexation was carried out in obedience to direct instructions from home. About the misrule and neglect of the king, or the oppression of his people by the uncontrolled officials and tax-gatherers who thrived under his nominal but ineffective despotism, there can be no two opinions. Before the British ascendancy had been established, the sharp Indian medicine for such a diseased state had been the dethronement of the inefficient despot by some new and vigorous usurper. The paramount power made such usurpations difficult, if not impossible. If the British became, in this indirect fashion, the guarantors of native dynasties, the reasonable corollary of their guarantee was the dethronement of a ruler whose misgovernment became intolerable. But the kings of Oudh inherited their authority from the viziers of the Moguls, and that authority was one of the few remaining symbols of the Mogul power. Dalhousie hesitated to destroy it. He would have preferred to leave to the King of Oudh his rank and title while taking over the administration of his country and depriving him of power. Direct annexation confirmed the prevalent impression

* In the Rajput state of Kerauli, a "protected ally," not a dependent principality, Dalhousie recognized an adopted heir after referring the question to the home authorities for decision.

that the British were pursuing a policy which would put an end to native rule.

Within forty-three years of the resumption of British expansion under Lord Hastings, British power had been extended, in the main, to the natural frontiers of India; in Burma it had passed beyond them. The establishment of British ascendancy in Nepal and Burma, in Sind and in the Punjab, might be reckoned as part of a necessary frontier policy. But annexations had been carried out in wholesale fashion where there was no external frontier to protect. If the application of the doctrine of lapse to Mahratta states had alarmed the Hindus, the annexation of Oudh had disturbed the Mohammedans. Throughout India an atmosphere of distrust had been created, in which a thousand unconnected discontents might readily thrive. To understand the state of Indian feeling it is necessary to



MARQUESS OF DALHOUSIE

From the Painting by Sir J. Watson Gordon, in the National Portrait Gallery.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

forget for a moment that each annexation, except that of Sind, could be reasonably justified and was for the good of the governed. The Indian peoples saw only that native principalities were crumbling beneath the relentless pressure of British power.

Administrative Reforms in India

Simultaneously with this immense growth of power there had come to pass a great series of changes and developments, political and administrative, social and economic, sometimes disturbing to the Indian mind, but marked in general by a deepening sense of British responsibility for the welfare of the peoples of India. Lord Hastings had improved the system of justice, by raising the pay and status of native judges and by warring against those corruptions and delays which turn justice sour. A succession of able officials—possibly the most learned, skilful and sympathetic in the history of the British connexion with India—strove to fix on a fairer basis the payment of the land-tax, the vital source of Indian revenue. Assessments were adapted to the native custom of the district, equitably apportioned, and fixed only for a term of years—a great advance upon the mistaken and inelastic settlement of the revenue adopted earlier in Bengal. To the patient tillers of the soil these more careful assessments were of unquestionable benefit, for, often in the past the land-tax had been used as a dreadful engine of oppression against a helpless peasantry.

After 1813 the British accepted in principle the duty of making some provision for Indian education. By the Charter Act of 1813 not less than £10,000 a year was to be set aside from the surplus revenues of the company for the encouragement of learned Indians and the promotion of a knowledge of the sciences.* Paltry as the dole may seem, it anticipated by twenty years the first vote from public funds for popular education in England. Unfortunately a controversy long delayed the application of the grant. Some thought that the basis of Indian education should be the ancient languages of the East; others, that

English should be the chief means of education in India, since it opened the gates of western knowledge. The controversy raged till 1835, when it was brought to an end by Macaulay's famous minute in favour of the English tongue and of western knowledge;† and during the succeeding years the foundations were laid of a system of schools and colleges for India.

Macaulay's greatest gift to India was, however, his draft of the Penal Code,‡ finished in 1837 though not applied till 1860. It was designed as part of a series of reforms which were in some ways a reflection of contemporary movements in England. Bentinck tried, perhaps vainly, to end the practice of infanticide. He suppressed as far as he could the dreadful rite of *Sati* (suttee), as the sacrifice of the widow on her husband's funeral pyre was called, though he had to battle against the forces of native prejudice supported by the sanctions of religion. Bentinck's attempts to crush the Thugs, a class of hereditary garotters, and the dacoits, or gangs of brigands, also brought him into conflict with the caste system. Yet no needless hurt was done to Indian feelings in matters of custom or religion. In view of the strength of evangelical sentiment at home, it is, indeed, surprising that the representatives of the British power firmly refused to give official aid to the missionary activities of the time, and even ventured to curb the extravagances of well-meaning zealots whose religious propaganda might have wounded the feelings of Moslem or Hindu. Only when the Indian peoples had to be protected against themselves was there any interference with custom or religion.

Dalhousie's Beneficent Rule

The vigorous administration of Dalhousie brought stir and change even in the unchanging East. He inspired every department of government with his own restless energy and unflagging zeal. He had gone to India full of eagerness for "great measures

† The essential passages are given in Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, pp. 290-1. Macaulay helped to establish the earlier schools or colleges (*ibid.*, pp. 291-6).

‡ Macaulay's *Works*, vol. xi, pp. 1-198 (Albany Edition).

* Act 53 Geo. III, c. 155, § 43.

INTRODUCTION OF RAILWAYS INTO INDIA

of internal improvement," and though never free, as he had hoped to be, from wars and "internal turmoil," he never lost sight of these objects. In his darling province, the Punjab, where he was ably seconded by the Lawrences, he reclaimed wastes, laid down roads and excavated canals for transport and irrigation. Increased facilities for communication and the carriage of goods made the Punjab at once easier to hold and better worth holding. In Burma, Dalhousie had to build up from the foundations the whole administrative fabric. But he restored the new province to economic health and indirectly added new branches to our eastern trade. The older provinces of India he linked together by road and railway, by post and telegraph. His experience at the board of trade during the English "railway mania" enabled him to give to India at least the outline of a railway system. By 1856 thousands of miles of track were being laid down, and a year later two million passengers had been carried on Indian railways. By these and other means he strove to increase the prosperity of the peoples of India. Though improvements in transport had a strategic as well as an economic value, Dalhousie, like a true Peelite, had an eye rather to markets than to mobilization.

Supremacy of Britain in India

When Dalhousie, broken by his labours, left Calcutta in 1856 he had brought almost the whole of India under the British dominion. As ruler, as overlord or as an ally whose word could not be gainsaid, the company was supreme from Rangoon to Karachi, and from Cape Comorin to the snows of Kashmir. A vast work of internal improvement had been carried out, the prosperity of the peoples of India had been greatly increased, and Dalhousie's schemes of development had established the means for increasing it still further. All India seemed prosperous, peaceful, law-abiding. Within its borders the *Pax Britannica* had imposed upon warring sects and hostile peoples a tranquillity unknown since the empire of the Moguls had crumbled to decay. The frontiers had seldom been safer. Russia, which had seemed to menace them, was for

the moment disabled. In 1857 Dalhousie's successor was able to obtain added securities for peace by coming to an understanding with India's once dangerous enemy Dost Mahommed of Afghanistan, and by settling a quarrel with Persia.

Political and Religious Unrest

Yet beneath the thin crust of apparent calm were surging the volcanic fires and energies of a great discontent. A generation had grown up to whom the anarchy of the years before the British had brought order to India was indeed a tradition, but had never been an experience. In parts of India the very law and order established by the British had restricted the liberty and withdrawn the livelihood of men accustomed for generations to know no law, or to evade the law they knew—dacoits, who had lived by robbery; nefarious tax-collectors, who had plundered the peasantry; the tribe of barnacle-like officials or dependants, who had battered on the people of Oudh and had fallen with the fall of its king. Dalhousie's drastic annexations had alarmed the princes and had wounded Indian pride, but they had generally given good government for bad. Yet an alien mastery had been substituted for native rule. And there were many thousands amongst the peoples of India who preferred bad government by their own princes to good government by British officials.

Superstition and religious dread added to political unrest. Western inventions had perhaps come too rapidly. The locomotives had been looked at askance even in England. To the Indian mind there was something uncanny in these iron monsters, fed by coal and water, hastening along with their loads of heavy carriages; and the temptation to travel by train might be a subtle device to undermine caste. Still more magical were the arts by which messages were sped invisibly on wires over long distances. And while new inventions were being introduced old customs were being attacked. *Sati* was cruel, but it was sanctified by religion. The prohibition of it seemed to portend that the British were going to impose their ideas in matters with which they had hitherto

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

refrained from meddling. Moreover, under Dalhousie they wished to educate women, and the sanctity of the zenana seemed to be threatened; and, despite the careful impartiality of the government, the activities of Christian missionaries suggested that the conquerors might endeavour, as other conquerors had done, to impose their religion on their subjects. The fear of proselytism,



GROUP OF SEPOYS AND GRENADIERS (21ST REGIMENT) IN THE MADRAS ARMY

The havildar (sergeant) and drummer are in full dress; one sepoy is in heavy marching order, the other in fatigue dress. A Lascar, *puckally* (water-carrier) and a pension boy are also represented.

From "The Illustrated London News," April 25th, 1857.

however ill founded, contributed its share to the prevailing unrest.

India is a land of long memories and her peoples are tenacious of tradition. British ascendancy, won so easily and, as time is reckoned in India, so quickly, might pass away as quickly and as easily as it had come. It might prove to be no more than an episode. The British were, after all, only new-comers. There seemed even to be something fantastic and unreal in the rapid establishment of complete domination over teeming millions

by a mere handful of Europeans, whose power was based upon tiny islands thousands of miles away. There was a story that the British numbered, all told, only a hundred thousand. Their power grew mysteriously, but thrice within half a generation it had been shaken, first by the retreat from Kabul, then by the errors of the Sikh wars, and again by rumours of disaster in the struggle with Russia. If British arms were not invincible, neither, perhaps, was the British Raj permanent. It was to last no more than a hundred years—so ran the native prophecy—and in 1857 the centenary of Plassey might be celebrated by its fall.

This belief that the British domination was temporary and in some way unreal cannot, from the Indian standpoint, be lightly dismissed as groundless. India had not been conquered solely by British troops; nor could it have been. It had been conquered, as it was held, partly by British soldiers, partly by the aid of Indian allies, but mainly by a native or sepoy army under the command of British officers. Less than a third of the little army with which Clive achieved the miracle of Plassey was European. Wellington fought before Seringapatam with a force greater, it is true, than he demanded at the outset of the Peninsular War, but only a small part of that force was British; much more than half of the army which he led to victory at Assaye was Indian. In 1857 the sepoys outnumbered the British soldiers in India by about five to one. And the sepoy army was inflamed with pride, for it believed that while the blunders of the Sikh wars were British the victories were its own.

Valorous and loyal in the past, this wonderful sepoy army was to show valour and loyalty again in the future. But in 1857 it was throbbing with grievances, some genuine, some imaginary; errors or misunderstandings about pay; the choking of avenues to a career for native officers of talent; fears of the violation of caste through service overseas. Discipline had grown lax; it was at its worst in the self-important Bengal army, which was discontented and mutinous. Firmly handled by men like those who had fought with Clive and Wellesley, mutiny

UNREST THAT PRECEDED MUTINY

might have been checked and the discipline of the army restored. But too many officers were old and nerveless. A rigid system of promotion by seniority and the diversion of able soldiers to political work had com-

soldier to two dozen sepoys. This no doubt showed sublime confidence of British officialdom in the loyalty of the sepoy forces, but it made mutiny easy.

Mutiny was not unknown. It had broken



Cribs & Co. del.

bined to reduce the efficiency of the service. As if to enhance the dangers, British regiments in India were badly distributed. They were dispersed in small garrisons over a wide area; essential roads, bridges and stores were left under the guard of sepoys alone; and in Bengal there was only one British

out from time to time, and had been sometimes handled with firmness, but more often with cruel weakness. In 1857, when discontent and uneasiness were already doing their deadly work, a frantic movement of religious terror ran through the native armies. The lessons of the Crimean War

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

led to the substitution of the Enfield rifle for the old "Brown Bess."* The new rifle required a greased cartridge. A rumour spread through the sepoy army that it was

cartridges were ever served out to the sepoys is denied by some authorities.† But the rumour was believed by the sepoys, and it worked deadly mischief. It unloosed "the desperate tempest of the Mutinies."

When the storm broke over India, in January, 1857, Lord Canning had been governor-general for less than a year. Though an able, calm and courageous man, his experience of India was slight, and he had neither the gift for rapid decision nor the masterful grip of Dalhousie. When the first sporadic mutinies broke out, they were repressed, indeed, but without the swift and dramatic force that might have checked the stirrings of revolt. Then the full fury of the storm was felt at Meerut, a great military station to the north-west of Delhi. Eighty-five sepoys had refused to handle their cartridges. On May 9th these men were publicly disgraced and were sent to jail in irons. Next day (Sunday) the sepoys mutinied and rescued their comrades. There was a strong British force at Meerut, but its general was old and irresolute. Pillage, arson and murder went unchecked. The mutineers dispersed unpursued; and, worst of all, no word was sent to warn the scanty British force at Delhi that bands of armed sepoys were on their way to attack it.

Soon all the upper valley of the Ganges was in a ferment. Sepoys slew their officers and murdered white women and children. The life of every European in the disturbed districts was in peril. On May 11th the arrival of mutineers from Meerut was the signal for a rising at Delhi which gave that ancient symbol of imperial power into rebel keeping. Its king, the enfeebled heir of the Great Moguls, was made the half-unwilling figure-head of the revolt. Cawnpore was besieged, and on June 27th it was betrayed. The Nana Sahib, adopted son of the late peshwa, seeking revenge for the refusal of a pension to which he had the title neither of justice nor necessity, lured the British from their defences by the promise of a safe-conduct, and gave them up to brutal massacre. At Lucknow, Henry Lawrence found



"BROWN BESS," 1851 ENFIELD RIFLE, 1857

From the exhibits in the Royal United Service Museum, Whitehall.

to be smeared with pig's grease and the fat of the cow. This diabolically ingenious compound seemed to attack the religion of the sepoys, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, for the pig is unclean to the Mohammedan and the cow is a sacred animal to the Hindu. No such attack was intended. That greased

* Nicholson had tried, in vain, after seeing the needle-gun at Berlin in 1851, to persuade the government to adopt an improved weapon.

† Lord Roberts held that there was carelessness on the part of some contractors for cartridges (*Forty-one Years in India*).

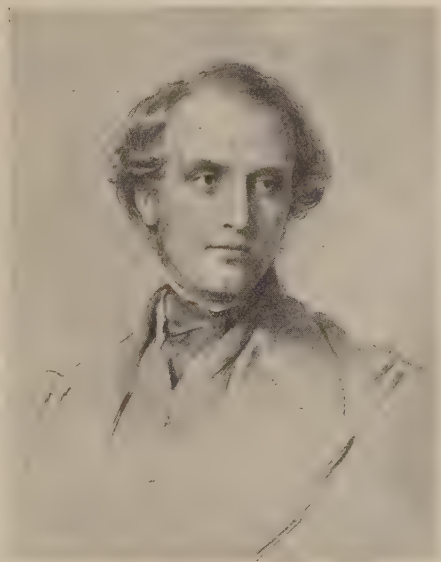
JOHN LAWRENCE AND THE MUTINY

himself in the centre of a hostile country. His little force was weakened and he himself was mortally wounded in a reconnaissance; and the British were closely besieged in the buildings of the residency (June 30th). By the early days of July the whole of the North-west Provinces and Oudh was in a flame.

British power in India was shaken to its foundations. But the princes of India, with few exceptions, remained loyal to the paramount power. The mutinies were not a national revolt. The sepoys were joined in some districts by large numbers of the civil population, but they did not carry with them every class of the people. There may have been bold spirits in India who had intended to organize the rising, but in fact the outbreaks began before they could be organized, and no general organization of the insurgents was ever established. The revolt was confined, in the main, to a small part of the vast area of India; the core of it was in the district lying in the valleys of the Ganges and its tributaries, between Patna on the west and Delhi on the east; and though there were mutinies in Bengal, in Rajputana, in the northern parts of the Mahratta territory, there was no general rising in these districts. Elsewhere there was unrest, and sepoys had to be disarmed. But the presidencies of Madras and Bombay and the newly conquered Punjab were kept under firm control. The Indian Mutiny was not a mutiny of India. A mutiny of India could not have been suppressed: it must have succeeded.

Fortunately there were men in India who were equal to the peril of the time. The restoration of British authority was organized from two sides—by John Lawrence from the Punjab, and by Canning from Calcutta. Lawrence, with the help of three able subordinates (John Nicholson, Herbert Edwardes, and Neville Chamberlain), boldly disarmed the sepoy regiments, striking hard and quickly wherever he suspected disaffection; for mutiny, said Nicholson, was “like small-pox—it spreads quickly and must be crushed as soon as possible.” With equal boldness the rulers of the Punjab raised new regiments from a population

which the sepoys had but lately helped to conquer and to overawe. Even unruly borderers hastened to fight for their new masters. “Men are coming from Miranzai, which we were subduing last winter,” wrote Edwardes; “and Miranzai is now as quiet as a Bayswater tea-garden.” Lawrence not merely used the Sikhs against the sepoys



EARL CANNING

From the Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

and harnessed one danger to overcome the other; he organized a striking force. British troops were still holding out on the famous Ridge above Delhi, looking down upon the city, but besieged rather than besieging. Lawrence was convinced of the imperative need for recapturing the city. “Clubs, not spades, are trumps.” He sent Nicholson with all his available forces to the help of the men who were holding the Ridge. Nicholson brought resolution to the attack as well as men. On September 14th an assault was launched on Delhi with Nicholson at its head. That gallant soldier fell at the first onset, but the city was entered, and within a few days the British had mastered it once more.

Canning was helped by a happy accident.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

British troops were on their way to China in order to support a quarrel of which we have little reason to be proud. They were promptly diverted from the distant contest to meet the pressing danger. Gathering together every available man, Canning sent Havelock to relieve Lucknow. Eleven days after the storming of Delhi, Havelock fought his way, with Outram's aid, to the be-

ve-
vember that Campbell was able to advance. In eight days he was inside Lucknow. A second time the garrison was relieved, and this time its gallant defenders, with their precious charge of women and children, were withdrawn in safety. Yet the city of Lucknow had a second time to be left in rebel hands. Then Sir Colin Campbell organized systematic campaigns of reconquest, slow



CAWNPORE: PASSAGE OF THE GANGES, NOVEMBER, 1857

From the Painting by George Jones, R.A., in the Glasgow Art Gallery. By permission of the Corporation of Glasgow.

leaguered residency (September 25th). Thus by the end of September the course of the mutinies was stayed. But it was not yet turned. In hacking his way to Lucknow, Havelock had been compelled to fight a series of desperate battles, and he had forced the streets of the city at a terrible cost. His army, never large, was now depleted and exhausted, and he was in turn besieged.

Ministers at home had been slow to realize the magnitude of the danger that threatened India; they had been slower still to act. Sir Colin Campbell, who arrived at Calcutta in August to take the supreme command, was a general without an army. Reinforcements began to arrive in October; they came slowly, and it was not until No-

but sure, which dragged on for nearly eight months. When Lucknow was stormed for the third and last time, in March, 1858, it must have been plain to the mutineers that the game was lost. But it was not until three months afterwards that their resistance was finally broken down, and even later a few desperate fugitives still fought amongst the hills.

From the British in India and at home there rose a cry for vengeance. Canning refused to "govern in anger." "Justice, and that as stern and inflexible as law and might will make it, I will deal out," he wrote. "But I will never allow an angry or indiscriminating act or word to proceed from the government of India." He was derided as "Clemency Canning": the reproach has



THE RELIEF OF LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER, 1857

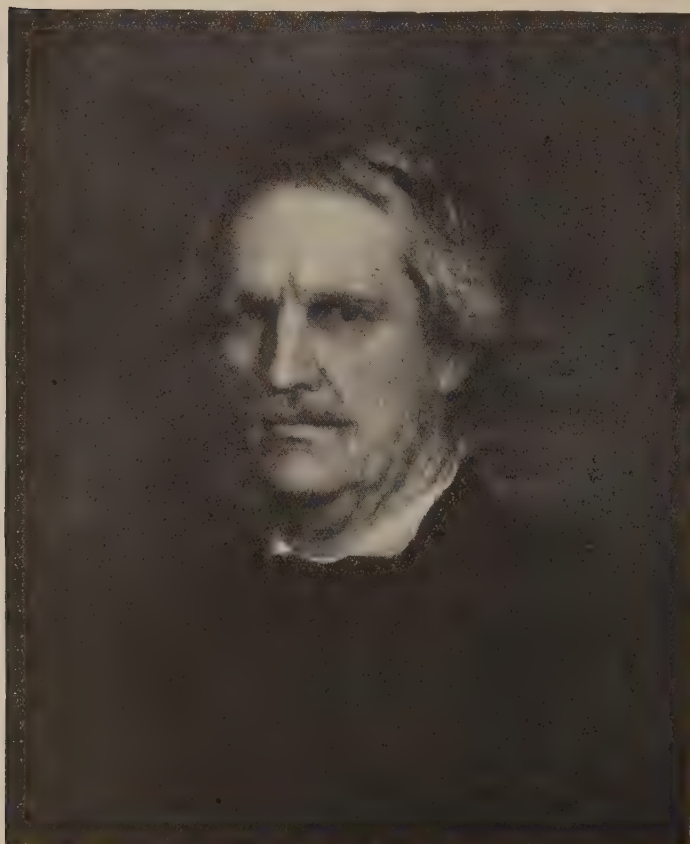
From the Painting by T. Jones Barker (1859), in the Glasgow Art Gallery. By permission of the Corporation of Glasgow.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

become a title of honour. "The law," said Canning, "shall be deliberately vindicated." But he set himself resolutely against the danger of reprisals, which would make India "ungovernable by England." It was the

The mutinies were the death-knell of the East India Company. It had won and organized an empire almost against its will. But the company's rule over its completed dominion was short. The transfer of its

powers might not, in any event, have been long delayed. Already parliament determined the frame of government for India, and the cabinet controlled the policy of the directors. Since 1833 the company had ceased to trade and had been restricted to its political and administrative functions. Any further change must necessarily be more formal than real, for the kernel of the old company had been removed and only the shell remained. But the directors fought strenuously against the abolition of their ancient corporation, and their case was very ably stated by John Stuart Mill, who was then a departmental chief in the company's service. Their protests were made in vain. The Government of India Act of 1858 abolished the company, trans-



LORD LAWRENCE

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

moderation of Canning, and of lieutenants like Outram and John Lawrence, that made possible the rebuilding of British power in India.*

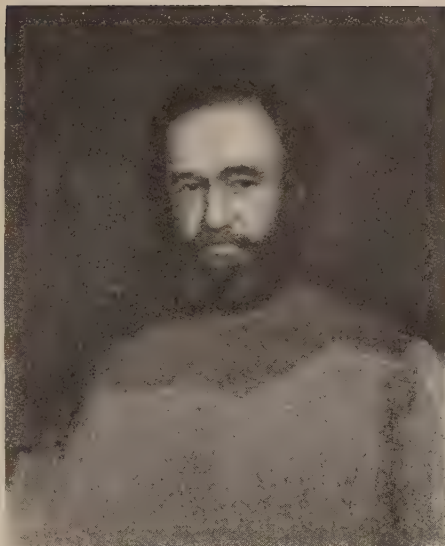
* For Canning's letters, see Fitzmaurice's *Life of Granville*, chapters x-xi, especially pp. 273-8 and 297.

ferred the government of India to the Crown, and vested the control of Indian affairs in a secretary of State assisted by a council. "Clemency Canning" ended his rule in India as the viceroy of the queen.



GENERAL JOHN NICHOLSON

From the Engraving (pubd. by H. Graves, 1867) in the British Museum, by A. N. Sanders, after the Painting by T. F. Dicksee.



SIR JAMES OUTRAM

From the Painting by T. Brigstocke, in the National Portrait Gallery.



SIR HENRY HAVELOCK

From the Engraving (1858) in the British Museum, by J. Sinclair, after the Painting by W. Crabbe.



COLIN CAMPBELL, LORD CLYDE

From the Painting by T. Jones Barker, in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.



THE TRADE CARRIERS OF THE 'SIXTIES

The famous tea clippers *Ariel* and *Tae ping*, off the *Lizard*, racing home from China.

From "*The Illustrated London News*," September 22nd, 1866.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE AGE OF PALMERSTON (1858-65)

PALMERSTON was out of office from February, 1858, to June, 1859, but, apart from this brief and partial eclipse, he dominated English political life from the moment in which he was called to power at the crisis of the Crimean War until his death in 1865. Whether in office or in opposition, Palmerston was the central figure of the time.

To the British people these years were years of prosperity. All the material gifts of life were showered upon them in ample measure. Industrial and economic progress was not, of course, unbroken. But broadly the age was one of comfort and well-being, of an easy contentment, passing at times

into enervating somnolence. Industry expanded and prospered; and agriculture, disappointing the prophets of evil, maintained itself without the artificial stimulus of the Corn Law. Commerce, as Disraeli said with justice, was "never so vast and never so void of mere speculation."* Freed from obstructive tariffs, trade expanded without hindrance. Our ships were upon every sea and our goods in every market. If in the past Britain had paid the penalty of becoming the workshop of the world, it was now profiting a hundredfold by the advantages it had won. And though there were still

* To Lord Derby, October 27th, 1859. Buckle's *Disraeli*, iv, 265.

PROSPERITY OF THE MID-VICTORIAN PERIOD

inequalities to be adjusted and wrongs to be righted, it is none the less true that from the 'fifties to the early 'seventies prosperity was in all probability more widely and more evenly diffused than at any time since the Seven Years' War.

There was another side to the shield. While fortune smiled, some held that the finer senses of the people were blunted. Ruskin and Carlyle, the prophets of art and energy, thundered against the materialism and intellectual sloth of their time. Ruskin had long despaired of his countrymen attaining to a clearer vision or a finer temper until "this disgusting nineteenth century" had—he could not say "breathed," but—"steamed its last." His contemporaries, he thought, valued the circumstances of life above life itself, the setting more than the jewel. The British people were, indeed, in the full stream of Victorianism, with all its solid material success and spiritual weaknesses, its real strength and its artificial pretensions.

Sentiment and convention stood for more, sincerity and frankness possibly for less, than they are supposed to stand for to-day. A later generation has found much that is repellent in the sometimes unctuous self-satisfaction of the mid-Victorians. It has been apt to condemn them as at once cruel and sentimental, self-assertive and inefficient, boastful of progress but indolent in thought and blind to beauty.

Yet we cannot without hypocrisy return a facile verdict against the mid-Victorians. From their own ranks sprang the angry prophets who denounced them most roundly, and there can be no balanced judgment on their generation which does not take account of the scourgers as well as of the scourged. Nor was their generation deficient in intellectual and imaginative power. Meredith, Swinburne and George Eliot, to name only three creative artists of widely different views and tempers, were writing at their best, and Matthew Arnold was establishing himself as



FASHIONS OF THE LATE 'FIFTIES AND EARLY 'SIXTIES

The beach at Brighton.

From "The Illustrated London News," October 26th, 1859, after a Drawing by Miss Runciman.

the apostle of "sweetness and light." Whistler as a painter, and William Morris as a pioneer in the revival of decorative craftsmanship, were raising the standard of artistic taste. Darwin and others were hewing out the paths along which the adventurers of science might advance to fruitful discovery. And the critics—Ruskin and Carlyle, Arnold and Morris—all had their enthusiastic disciples among the despised mid-Victorians. There is much in this period which is alien from the modern temper, but the twentieth century is not yet able to pass final judgment, either in praise or blame, upon the age of Palmerston.

Influence of the Middle Classes

Power rested in these years with the solid and comfortable middle classes, with the men who owed their prosperity to the later and more generally profitable stages of the industrial revolution and to the parallel expansion in commerce. Their prosperity had been won on comparatively easy terms. For the British people had enjoyed the advantage of an excellent start in the race; they were especially favoured in this period by the natural resources and geographical position of the country; and their potential rivals abroad were preoccupied with domestic problems and distracted with foreign wars. Possibly manufacturers and merchants were inclined to take too much credit to themselves for their successes, and recognized too little the favouring conditions. They magnified their own achievements and undervalued their good fortune. And this produced in the dominant class a sense of superiority and self-satisfaction, irritating both to the foreigner abroad and to the workman at home.

Palmerston almost exactly expressed the mind of the prosperous middle classes. They took a sympathetic but rather patronizing interest in the constitutional struggles of continental peoples, and so did Palmerston. They were content with the charter of liberties conferred upon them by the Great Reform Act, and their content became more marked as merchants and manufacturers gained an increasing share in the membership of the House of Commons. So that

while they favoured the constitutional aspirations of the German Liberals and the Piedmontese reformers, men who seemed to be striving for liberties such as they themselves enjoyed, they did not believe that constitutional charity should begin at home. "The towns," Stanley told Disraeli in 1860, "are full of money—and of Conservative opinion disguised as Moderate Liberalism."* And it has been said that the real ruler of England during these years was the "bad-headed gentleman at the back of the omnibus," whom Palmerston courted and upon whom he depended for support.

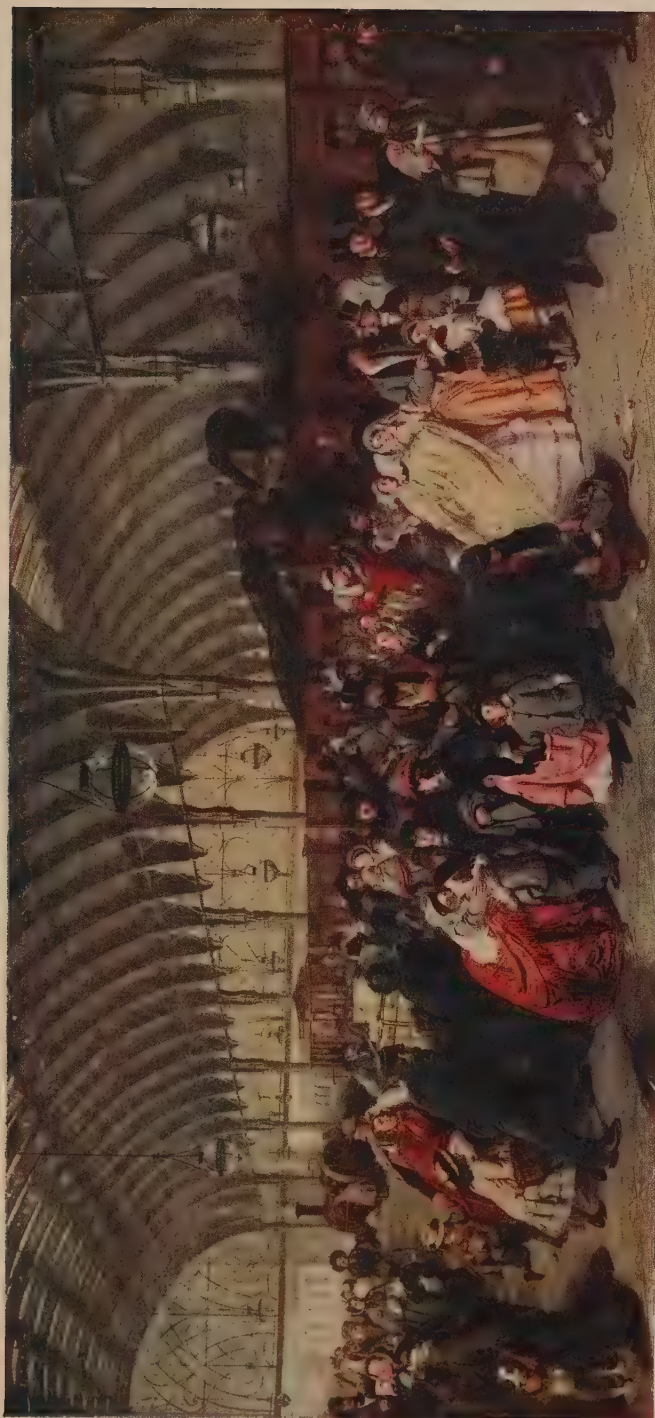
Conservatives as Reformers

Derby and Disraeli formed a ministry in February, 1858, but they were without a majority. A fortuitous coalition had opened for them the way to office, but it dissolved as soon as Palmerston was overthrown. The ministry gained few recruits of importance and, though Disraeli humbled himself for the sake of his party, Gladstone—that "roving iceberg"—could not be persuaded to join it. Feeble on the treasury bench and weak in a division, the ministry was condemned to placate the opposition. Disraeli's budget was saved by Gladstone. But the Government of India Bill could only be framed and carried with Whig aid. Measures for which Whigs had long striven against Tory resistance at last became law. Two ancient parliamentary disqualifications—one of faith and one of means—were removed. Jews were admitted to Parliament by means of an act which allowed each house to frame the oath required on admission. And the property qualification for membership of the Commons was at last abolished—the first of the "Points of the Charter" to reach the statute-book. These sound, if not conservative, measures owed as much to the opposition as to the ministry, but they helped to keep the government in office. Palmerston said, with Voltaire, that he condemned ministers to keep their places.†

Palmerston's benevolence was prompted by differences on the opposition benches. Palmerston and Russell each nursed a

* Buckle, iv, 274.

† Ashley, *Palmerston*, ii, 151.



THE RAILWAY STATION (1862)

From the Painting by W. P. Frith, R.A.

By permission of the Trustees of the Royal Holloway College.

DEFEAT OF THE DERBY MINISTRY

grievance against the other. Palmerston was also distrusted by the Peelites. Some Whigs, too, like Clarendon, had been disgusted with his sauntering ways of doing business while in office—with his “system of hoping and believing, instead of acting.” Whig opinions on parliamentary reform varied up and down the entire scale. Some Whigs were almost more conservative than the Conservatives, and wanted “to lie quite still,” and, in Palmerston’s words, “to wait and see.” Disraeli even believed that Palmerston desired “above all things to place himself at the head of the Conservative party.”* Other Whigs, like Russell, wanted a genuine but moderate reform. And the Radicals, led by Bright, wanted a reform so extensive that moderate Whigs rejected it “root and branch.” No opposition so divided was ready for office. It could do no more than serve the Tories with “spice and pepper,” until its own differences were resolved.†

Disraeli’s Reform Bill

All parties were, however, pledged to reform in some degree, and ministers felt compelled to prepare a bill. A Whig lady had predicted that “a Fagin Cabinet and a Ministry of Dodgers” would attempt to outbid the Whigs; that Derby would do what Disraeli thought might succeed; and that “go along teapot, never mind the lid!” would be their motto.‡ This is fair neither to Derby nor to Disraeli. Derby was less prejudiced than Palmerston; Disraeli was a genuine, if peculiar, reformer; and there were convinced reformers in the cabinet. If a reform needs must come they wished to shape it, and no canon of political honour required that they should leave the credit to the Whigs.

Disraeli believed that the Commons ought to represent a balance of the interests of the nation, not in its numbers, but in its varied wealth and intelligence. His bill, introduced in February, 1859, was designed to broaden the franchise without effectively lowering it. The county franchise was to be reduced to a nominal parity with that in the

boroughs. The borough freeholder was to vote not in the county but in the borough. Thrift and education were to be rewarded with certain “fancy franchises”; and fifteen seats were to be transferred from small towns to more populous boroughs and counties. Disraeli’s professed aim was “to accommodate the settlement of 1832 to the England of 1859,” but nobody accepted his bill as satisfying this formula. By habit and tradition people expected reform to mean redistribution and an extension of the borough franchise. In neither respect was the bill effective, and the memory of 1832 killed it. Russell moved a crafty, but disingenuous, amendment which brought together the heterogeneous elements of opposition, and ministers being defeated by a majority of 39, parliament was dissolved.

Interest in the election was lukewarm. The Conservatives won some seats, but not enough to give them the reality of power. Ministers were immediately challenged upon both reform and foreign policy. Malmesbury’s conduct of foreign affairs had altogether failed to inspire confidence. Disraeli himself considered it feeble to the verge of incompetence. In the struggle of the Italians, aided by Napoleon III, to drive the Austrians from Italy, British sympathies were with the Italians. Malmesbury’s diplomacy had been correct but ineffective. British feelings were not correct; they were hostile to Austria, and here Palmerston spoke for England. While Russell led the attack on the ministry about reform, Palmerston found a congenial topic in Malmesbury’s shortcomings. Disraeli denied that the Whigs had any monopoly in reform, which Russell had so long been “handling and fumbling.” Neither his gibes nor his eloquence availed to save the ministry from defeat, and the cabinet resigned.

Palmerston Recalled to Office

Derby’s ministry fell not so much through its demerits as because the Whigs had drawn together and had patched up their differences at a party meeting. Palmerston and Russell had each agreed to serve under the other. The queen sent for neither of them. She disliked both, and resented the embar-

* Disraeli to Stanley, February 10th, 1859. See Buckle, iv, 199.

† Clarendon, *Life*, ii, 172, 173.

‡ Lady Teresa Lewis, *ib.*, 169-70.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

rassment of making a choice between them. "These two men sit upon her mind like lead and give it a permanent indigestion," wrote Clarendon soon afterwards. The queen turned for help to the able and amiable Granville. But Granville lacked that touch of the bully which is needed in the management of a variegated and unruly team, and neither of the rival leaders desired to serve under him.* He thankfully abandoned his attempt to form a cabinet, and the queen sent for Palmerston. With surprising ease he formed a ministry of Whigs and Peelites, Russell taking the foreign office and Gladstone the exchequer. Palmerston tried in vain to persuade Cobden to join him, but the cabinet was still a strong one, though it was overloaded with ducal ornaments and weak in youthful ability.

Palmerston's Ascendancy

The prime minister was nearing seventy-five, but he was full of high spirits and a jaunty vitality. No dissensions with his old rival broke the calm of the ministry. Palmerston and Russell had not been long in office before distrust excited by their "intimate alliance" replaced the old fears of their disunion. For a time foreign affairs, upon which they were agreed, outweighed in importance the domestic questions upon which they differed. Russell accepted the stale cake of Palmerston's domestic conservatism because it was iced with continental liberalism. Some, valuing reform at home more than constitutional progress abroad, have held that this agreement was a disaster more serious than the earlier differences. But it can hardly be questioned that the ministry correctly represented the public temper, and in one important respect it was of great significance. It enabled Whigs and Peelites to work intimately together in the face of a formidable opposition, and cemented the union of the two parties from which was ultimately to issue the Liberalism that made reform inevitable.

Reform scarcely ruffled the peace of the cabinet. But the Whigs were pledged to it, and in 1860 a bill lowering the borough franchise and providing for a slight redis-

tribution of seats, was half-heartedly introduced. It excited less interest than a Turnpike Trust Bill, and was allowed to expire, mourned neither by Conservatives who feared it, nor by Radicals who despised it. Reform troubled Palmerston no more. His mastery was almost unchallenged. For the rest of his life the will of the party had to be the will of its chief. When things went well, he got the credit; if they went ill, other ministers bore the blame. A politician said in 1864 that Palmerston played with ministers a game of chuck-farthing—"Heads I win, tails you lose."† It was Disraeli who had now to complain of party disloyalty, of "chronic revolt and unceasing conspiracy."‡ Derby might occasionally "give the Lords a gallop," and Disraeli might sometimes allow his followers to "smell gunpowder," but they could do nothing to shake the ascendancy of Palmerston.

Paradoxically enough, while citizens were too deeply engaged in private business to care much for domestic reforms, they were deeply interested in foreign affairs. In 1859 and 1860 a panic arose about the military and naval progress of France. The public alarm was shared by Russell and Palmerston. It led to increased expenditure on defence works and the navy, and to a widespread enthusiasm for volunteering. Probably the last thought in the tormented mind of Napoleon III was to quarrel with England. But the scare bred suspicion between the two countries, which was to bear bitter fruit in years to come.

Britain and Italian Independence

Britain took no active share in the continental struggles of the time, but the progress of Italy towards independence and unity was watched with eager interest and generous sympathy. Palmerston and Russell, though hampered by the distrust of the queen and the prince consort, cast the weight of British influence upon the side of the Italians. Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi became English heroes, and the triumphs of the Italians were greeted almost as if they had been British victories.

† Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii, 258.

‡ Buckle's *Disraeli*, iv, 291.

* Fitzmaurice, *Life of Granville*, vol. i, ch. xii.



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1860

Lord Palmerston (Prime Minister) is speaking in a debate on the commercial treaty with France. The principal figures represented are: Speaker, J. Evelyn Denison (afterwards Viscount Ossington); on and behind the Treasury Bench—Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, Lord John Russell, W. E. Gladstone, Richard Cobden, John Bright, Lord Elcho and E. Cardwell. On and behind the front Opposition Bench—Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Stanley, E. Bulwer Lytton and Sir John Pakington. Lord Charles Russell stands by the Speaker's chair.

From the Engraving (pubd. by T. Agnew and Sons, 1866) in the British Museum, by T. O. Barlow, after the Painting by J. Phillips.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

On another question, which affected British interests more nearly, opinion was divided. In 1861 the controversy, long matured, between the northern and southern states of the American Union flamed into civil strife. The southerners claimed the right to secede from the union; the northerners denied it. In the south slavery was

conflict and by its consequences. The contest divided the nation. Broadly, south sympathized with south and north with north; the upper classes in Britain with the southern planters, and the industrial classes with the north. But sympathies varied curiously. Some supported the southerners as the exponents of what would now be



SCENE DURING THE COTTON FAMINE IN LANCASHIRE

The Manchester and Salford Provident Society, to relieve the prevalent distress, issued tickets available in a provision store.

From "The Illustrated London News," November 29th, 1862.

regarded as an essential part of the economic foundation of state and society: to a growing majority in the north it was a curse to be abolished. The north was for Protection and the south for Free Trade. These lines of division were not absolute. There were dissidents both in the north and in the south. During the Civil War, brother sometimes fought against brother, and father against son. But the war finally became a struggle for political unity and the emancipation of the slaves.

Britain was profoundly stirred both by the

called "self-determination"; others, because of their fiscal orthodoxy; and others again, because they thought a schism of the union might be advantageous to Britain. On the other side, thousands espoused the cause of the north with passionate earnestness, and regarded the war as a great crusade of the north against what Bright called "the blight and curse of slavery." Probably a majority of his countrymen agreed with Bright. But the north was stung to anger by the number of British sympathizers with men whom it regarded as rebels, and by the

THE COTTON FAMINE

consideration shown by the British government for the rights as belligerents of the secessionist states.

Britain suffered directly from the war. It paralysed the cotton trade. Cotton then came almost entirely from the southern states. During the war the economic system of the south was disorganized, its plantations

plum-puddings."* Soon the supplies of raw cotton were exhausted. The spindle and the loom stood idle, and the artisan felt the pinch of want. Thousands of careful families which shrank in horror from the poor-law were driven by starvation to the humiliation of seeking outdoor relief. But even a relaxed poor-law was unequal to the need.



THE SEIZURE OF THE CONFEDERATE ENVOYS ON THE BRITISH STEAMER *TRENT*,
NOVEMBER 8, 1861

Captain Wilkes, of the Federal war-ship *San Jacinto*, carried off Messrs. Mason and Slidell in the Bahama Channel, after twice firing upon the *Trent*. The envoys were conveyed to Boston on November 19th.

From "The Illustrated London News," December 7th, 1861.

were neglected, and its communications interrupted. The flow of cotton to the English mills was abruptly checked. Lancashire was soon in the grip of the cotton famine. At first the manufacturers did not feel its full consequences, for they chanced to be overstocked and profited by rising prices. But they were short-sighted in their apathy. The impatient Palmerston, angry because they did not at once organize other supplies, compared them to the people "who held out their dishes and prayed that it might rain

Relief works on a large scale had to be subsidized by the exchequer and private benevolence supplemented public assistance. Yet amidst great suffering, borne with fortitude, the artisans of Lancashire remained unchanged in their belief that the north was waging a holy war. Supplies of cotton obtained from Egypt and India, though of inferior quality, gradually made possible a partial resumption of the manufacture. But the distress of the operatives was not finally

* Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 211.

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relieved until the war was over and cotton came once more from America.

Meantime Britain and the north had each become exasperated with the other. Britain was indignant about the seizure of two southern envoys who were crossing to Europe on a British ship, and bitterness was not wholly eradicated by their immediate release. The north was furious because British manufacturers sold guns and supplies to the south.

Brotherhood. The brotherhood had many sympathizers and allies among the Irish emigrants to America, of whom some had fought in the American armies. After the war a number of these Irish Americans returned to devote their energy and experience to the Fenian cause. They gave the movement a new impulse and were soon organizing and drilling companies of Fenian volunteers. In 1865 a Fenian newspaper,



THE CONFEDERATE CRUISER *ALABAMA*

For two years this vessel harried Federal merchant shipping until she met her fate in an action with the Federal warship *Kearsarge*, off Cherbourg, in 1864.

From a Drawing by Charles W. Wyllie.

Southern privateers destroyed northern shipping, and three of them—the *Florida*, the *Shenandoah*, and the notorious *Alabama*, all built in British yards—wrought enormous damage, for which Britain had ultimately to pay (1872) three and a quarter millions in compensation to the United States.

Yet another consequence of the war was less direct but not less serious. The miseries of Ireland had led to extensive emigration, particularly to the United States, and had fed the political discontents of Irishmen at home. There had long existed in Ireland a subterranean movement for independence, and about 1858 the separatists organized a powerful secret society called the Fenian

called the *Irish People*, declared that the object of the brotherhood was the overthrow of the British empire. Some of the Fenian leaders were arrested and convicted. But though Fenianism was checked for the moment it was not crushed, and was to become during the next few years a serious menace to peace and order.

Despite the financial strain and the widespread want created in Lancashire by the cotton famine, and despite the miseries and disorders of Ireland, Britain as a whole was rich and contented. This prosperity enabled Gladstone to carry financial reforms which may be regarded as the completion of the work of Peel. In 1860, with Cobden's aid,

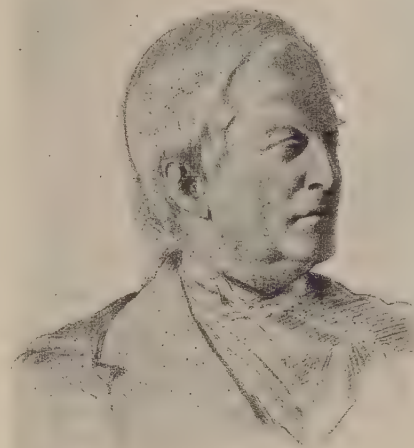
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ECONOMIES

he made a commercial treaty with France for a mutual reduction of duties. Of the duties which still remained in the tariff all but 48 out of 419 were swept away. These reductions were paid for from the income-tax, increased by a penny, from the hop and malt tax, and from adjustments of other taxes to make them more profitable but less burdensome. Gladstone also attacked the paper duty, one of the "taxes on knowledge" which hampered the press, but in 1860 the House of Lords, disloyally encouraged by Palmerston, threw out his proposals for its abolition. In 1861 he included them in the Finance Bill, popular because it took off the additional penny from the income-tax. The House of Lords had to reject all or nothing, as it could not divide the bill. It was not bold enough to reject the whole budget, and consequently the paper duty was at last abolished. A revenue of £1,000,000 a year was thereby sacrificed. But rising receipts and economy in expenditure enabled Gladstone to reduce both direct and indirect taxation. By 1865 the income-tax was down to fourpence, the sugar duty was reduced by a third, and the tea duty by almost two-thirds. Gladstonian finance was a bulwark to the ministry and a strength to the country.

Economy is an excellent thing, and Gladstone rigidly enforced it. But sometimes the true thrift is to spend money. In the modern world popular ignorance spells public danger, and it is a doubtful economy to starve the elementary school. In 1859 the national expenditure on education had swollen to £836,000. Enormous as this amount might seem by comparison with the insignificant grants of twenty years before, it was still grotesquely inadequate for the nation's needs. To place within the reach of every child a good school under trained teachers would have cost many times that sum. But a loud cry arose against waste and profusion. In alarm the government appointed a commission, which reported in 1861 that the quality of much of the teaching provided was very poor. An increasing number of children attended schools of some sort, but many of the schools were, as might have been expected, badly equipped and

inefficiently staffed. It can now be seen that the country got as good value as it could reasonably have hoped to receive for its parsimonious doles. But the ministry yielded to the outcry against waste and attempted to effect economies.

Robert Lowe, the responsible minister, with Mr. Lingen, his chief official adviser,



ROBERT LOWE

*From the Engraving in the British Museum (1885-4-11-24).
by F. Holl, after a Drawing by George Richmond, R.A.*

framed a "code" designed to restrict expenditure by establishing a system of "payment by results." Unhappily they took a narrow view of the results which they desired. Grants were to be calculated on the proficiency shown by scholars in reading, writing and arithmetic. An absolutely rigid application of this economical measure of educational values proved impossible, yet the "code" served its immediate purpose. Expenditure fell and a general minimum of attainment in the sacred "Three R's" was secured in the aided schools.

In its remoter consequences, however, the

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new policy was disastrous. If it terrorized the incompetent it discouraged the skilful and the enterprising. The worst schools were raised up, but the best were dragged down. Teaching was narrowed to the subjects which "paid," since a more liberal curriculum seemed to be penalized by the code. Nor was this the sole ill effect of Lowe's policy. Ministers had underrated the ingenuity of the despised teachers. Unwittingly they fostered a travesty of education and drove the harried schoolmaster to drill his pupils, the intelligent along with the dull, into a mechanical but examinable competence in the grant-earning subjects. Alike in the teachers and in the taught, every impulse to intellectual adventure was now brusquely checked. And the expenditure soon mounted to its old figure as the teachers grew more skilful in substituting collective mesmerism for genuine education.

Consolidation of Trade Unionism

Before long Robert Lowe himself was to see the danger of stinting opportunities for popular education. For the political enfranchisement of the urban workman was near at hand. But during the 'fifties and the early 'sixties the working-class was more concerned with industrial organization than with political opinion. In the skilled trades, at least, trade unionism was being consolidated. The process of transforming local societies into national organizations under central direction, served and largely controlled by a skilled group of salaried officers, was going steadily forward. Five men—an engineer and a carpenter, an ironfounder, a bricklayer and a maker of ladies' shoes—formed a sort of cabinet of skilled industry, quite as able in its way as the cabinet of Lord Palmerston. Allan and Applegarth, Guile, Coulson and Odger were collectively the strongest leaders who have served trade unionism together at one time, and they gave the movement a coherent policy. They built up great friendly societies as well as the complicated machinery of industrial bargaining; and they did this in such a way as to make each side of their policy support and strengthen the other.

It was a great triumph of organization.

But on the whole the policy of this cabinet of artisans was pacific and even conservative. It was designed to perfect and protect the instrument of collective bargaining rather than to imperil it by needless aggression. In the main strikes were discouraged, and in this policy the leaders of trade unions were aided by the general contentment and prosperity of the time. The unions hoarded their funds and sought to improve the position of their members by negotiation or by parliamentary pressure, thereby avoiding any display of force which might have invited retaliatory attacks. And the leaders of the unions were wise in their generation, for trade unionism was soon to need all its garnered resources in money, reputation and experience in order to surmount the gravest crisis in its history.

A Period of Development

Palmerston's death in 1865 marked the close of a distinctive period in British history. The same year has also been taken to mark the ebb in the tide of Benthamite individualism which had run strongly for forty years. Overmuch stress can easily be laid upon such divisions, whether the changes marked are in the general trend of opinion or in the course of political action. The reign of Bentham had never been absolute or undivided. It had not prevented State interference with factories and the conditions of employment, or the assumption of a limited measure of public responsibility for public health and national education. To the same period belong great achievements of organization and mutual aid amongst the skilled artisans in the trade unions, the friendly societies and the co-operative stores. Yet these tendencies towards an increase of voluntary association on the one hand and of State responsibility for the needs of the community on the other were to find an even greater and more varied development in the years to come. And in the great political parties of the State there was to emerge not only a new Liberalism, but also a new Conservatism, each ready in different ways and from different motives to develop wider conceptions of the sphere of government.



THE DERBY CABINET OF 1866

The ministers present are: Earl of Derby, Duke of Buckingham, Earl of Malmesbury, Spencer H. Walpole, Edward Lord Stanley, Earl of Carnarvon, Jonathan Peel, Viscount Cranborne (afterwards 3rd Marquess of Salisbury), Benjamin Disraeli, Sir John Pakington, Sir Stafford Northcote, Gathorne Hardy, Lord Chelmsford, Lord Naas, and Lord John Manners.

Reproduced, by courtesy of Messrs. Graves & Co., from the Engraving by J. Scott, after the Painting by H. Gales.

CHAPTER XIX

SHOOTING NIAGARA—AND AFTER (1865-74)

ALMOST from the moment of Palmerston's death there began a change of men and measures, of parties and of vision. It was as if a weight had been removed from a spring. New forces were released, new men sprang into prominence or acquired authority. Liberalism, concentrating within itself the surviving strength of Whigs, Radicals and Peelites, was free to grapple with reform at home and with the causes of discontent in Ireland. Conservatism was able, though not immediately, to rally to its banner those in parliament and the country who had imagined themselves to be Whigs so long as Whiggism was disguised by the Palmerstonian mask; while on

the other hand, as Disraeli's influence grew within the party, Conservatism was able to confront its problems with a fresh mind and with increasing confidence. And outside conventional party channels the forces of organized labour were being slowly pushed by relentless necessity towards parliamentary action and towards a demand for such extensions of the franchise as would make their political influence effective.

These changes, many of them due to long-pent forces which Palmerston had held in check, began to manifest themselves, as can now be seen, as soon as Palmerston's influence was removed, but they were not at once revealed to contemporaries. At first it

seemed as if the outward changes were few and gradual. Russell became prime minister once more, but he was now, like too many of his cabinet, in the House of Lords, and his strength was failing. Gladstone, "unmuzzled" by his defeat at Oxford and his election for South Lancashire in 1865, took the lead in the Commons and became the driving force of the ministry. In 1867 Russell resigned the leadership of the party and Gladstone took his place. Meantime the ministry had fallen, and in June, 1866, Derby had become prime minister for the third time; but in less than two years he resigned and Disraeli became prime minister (February, 1868). The long battle of Gladstone and Disraeli, fought hitherto under the badges of other men, became at last an open duel between them.

Franchise Anomalies

If the change of men was gradual the change of measures was more quickly apparent. Russell's ministry at once turned to the question of reform. The chief evils of the existing system were three. The franchise was too high; the distribution of seats was flagrantly at variance with the distribution of population; corruption still thrived in the remaining rotten boroughs, and even amid less easy conditions elsewhere. The qualifications set up by the act of 1832 gave the vote only to one adult male in six. The constituencies, always varying greatly in size, bore little relation to population, and these anomalies became more manifest with time. The population had increased by 40 per cent. between 1831 and the census of 1861, and it had not changed evenly. In England especially the change had varied enormously from town to town and from county to county. In some districts the population had remained stationary or even declined; in others, and especially in great urban centres like London, Glasgow and Liverpool, it had doubled in thirty years. Yet Liverpool, with close upon half a million inhabitants, returned two members, just as did the Tower Hamlets, with 647,000 inhabitants, at one end of the scale, and Totnes, with only 4,000, at the other. The balance of the representation as well as the franchise

and the electoral habits of a Treby Magna or a North Loamshire called for readjustment and reform.

But in 1866 the House of Commons was a very imperfect instrument for the purpose. Only elected in the previous summer, it had no mind for the early dissolution which would assuredly follow reform. Chosen to support Palmerston, to whom the elections had given an increased majority, it was Liberal in name but Conservative in fact: a living compromise from which strength had departed on the death of its chief. "The House of Commons after the death of Lord Palmerston," said the Duke of Argyll in 1869, "was disorganized and demoralized. . . . It was a parliament that had no faith in any principle, no enthusiasm in any cause and no fidelity to any leader."* Gladstone found the house difficult to guide, and a cabinet, little changed from that over which Palmerston had presided, had not the courage to confront it with a bold measure of reform.

Gladstone's Reform Bill

The feeble bill which Gladstone apologetically introduced in March, 1866, touched only the franchise and left redistribution alone. Briefly, it would have given a vote to the householder who paid an annual rent of £7 in boroughs and of £14 in counties; and it would have created a lodger vote. Gladstone defended his proposals on the ground that they would not enfranchise too many working men. The bill was, in fact, so moderate that it embarrassed reformers and the opposition alike. "Ower bad for blessing and ower good for blame," it had no hearty friends, and its enemies had difficulty in contriving a satisfactory attack. The real strength of opposition came from the Liberal side of the house, though there were acrimonious critics among the Conservatives. The attack was led by Horsman, once an undistinguished chief secretary for Ireland, and by Robert Lowe, whose misfortunes as the minister responsible for education had compelled him to resign in 1862. Lowe was a very able man with a bitter but

* In the Lords, March 1st, 1869: *The Duke of Argyll's Autobiography and Memories*, ii, 249.

LOWE'S "CAVE OF ADULLAM"

eloquent tongue, and a distrust of democracy which sprang from his earlier experiences as an Australian statesman.

Lowe attacked the bill with vigour, and roundly denounced the working man whom it would enfranchise. "If you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness and facility for being intimi-

and his friends had gathered themselves together in a political Cave of Adullam, to which resorted all who were discontented and all who were in distress. "These slanderers of their countrymen," he was soon to tell the men of Birmingham, would yield to pressure and "would learn to be civil if they did not learn to love freedom."



SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AFTER THE DIVISION ON THE SECOND READING OF GLADSTONE'S REFORM BILL OF 1866

Robert Lowe, who led the opposition to the bill, is seen standing on the left, hat in hand; Gladstone is seated near Lowe on the front bench.

From a contemporary Wood-engraving.

dated; or if, on the other hand, you want impulsive, unreflecting and violent people," he said, "where do you look for them in the constituencies? Do you go to the top or to the bottom?"* Lowe impressed the Commons, but he irritated and insulted thousands of his countrymen out of doors. He did much to defeat the bill of 1866, but he did more to arouse in the constituencies the determination to secure a wider franchise. John Bright, his principal antagonist in the Commons, declared that Lowe

* *Hansard*, clxxii, 147-8.

Gladstone's bill was defeated, but not by a direct vote. First, ministers were compelled to promise that reform should be accompanied by redistribution. This was wise and necessary, for reform would have been of little use without it. But the aim of the opposition was to bargain for favourable terms of redistribution for counties and small towns as a counterpoise to the extended suffrage in the boroughs. In the second place, an ingenious amendment was carried to restrict the new franchise. It turned upon the difference between rent and rateable value,

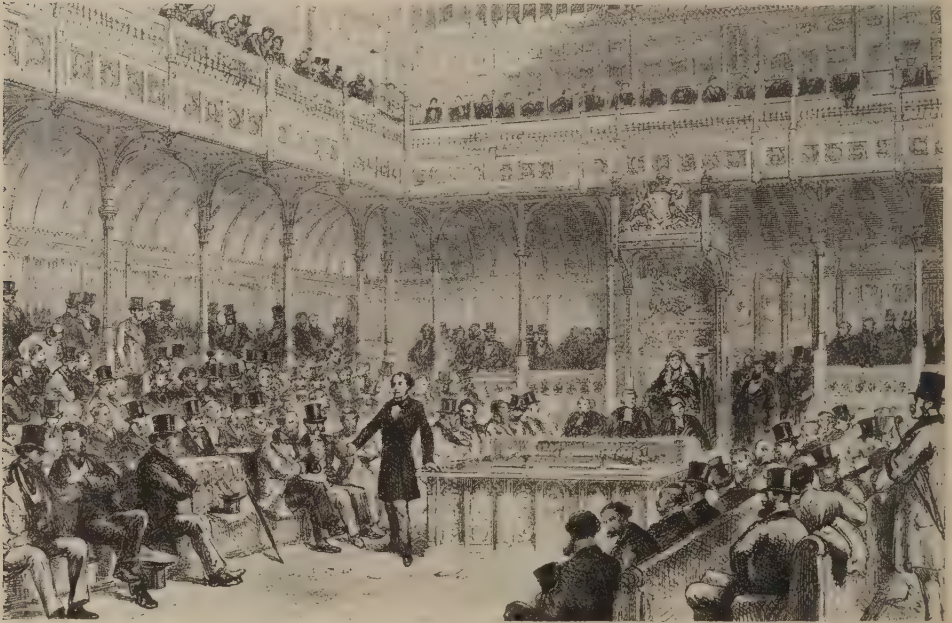
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which is commonly lower than rent. The amendment based the franchise upon the rateable value instead of the rent, and would, in effect, have raised the rental qualification in boroughs from seven pounds to eight pounds or more. It amounted, therefore, to a rejection of the main plan of the bill, and Russell promptly resigned.

Derby and Disraeli took office with a

ing the prejudices of timorous colleagues in the ministry, grew more determined about reform as they grew more familiar with the subject.

Organized labour was also driven by its own necessities to join actively in the battle. Trade unionism was in danger. Not only did it find itself without legal means of protecting its growing funds against dishonest



DISRAELI INTRODUCING THE REFORM BILL OF 1867

From a contemporary Wood-engraving.

ministry less feeble and inexperienced than in 1852 or 1858, but still lamentably weak. They were without an assured parliamentary majority, though they might have counted upon some Whig support in a resolute opposition to extensive reform. But no sooner were they in office than it was discovered that an extension of the franchise could no longer be resisted. Popular interest in the question, at first tepid, was now rising, and by 1867 it had reached fever-heat among the artisans of the great towns. Bright carried on an active and successful campaign for household suffrage. Liberals like Gladstone, released from the restraints of office and from the necessity of consider-

officials, but it had to face a serious public attack owing to the irresponsible outrages of members of some of the smaller unions. The larger unions had no sympathy with violence, and were in no way to blame for it. But the public did not make fine distinctions between union and union, and the great unions found their position imperilled. In consequence they felt the need for greater political influence in order to resist attack as well as to secure legal protection for their funds. They were therefore eager to obtain an extension of the franchise which would give increased voting power to the artisans. The leaders of trade unionism used their strength in support of Bright, and helped to



FENIAN OUTRAGE IN LONDON

The gap in the wall of Clerkenwell Prison, as seen from the yard, after the explosion of the bombs.

From "The Illustrated London News," December 21st, 1867.



FENIAN ATTACK ON A PRISON VAN IN MANCHESTER

Several prisoners were released from the van and a sergeant of police was killed.

From "The Illustrated London News," September 28th, 1867.

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make effective the growing demand for reform.

Disraeli quickly declared that "parliamentary reform should no longer be a question which should decide the fate of ministers." This was a comfortable enough doctrine, but, unhappily for Disraeli, ministers themselves were not agreed about reform. Derby and Disraeli were in favour of a bold measure; several of their most able colleagues favoured a restricted one. Conservatives on the back benches were equally divided; some were for the smallest possible alteration, and others for a generous measure which would serve as a barrier against further and more revolutionary changes. Finally, after plans had been five times altered within four weeks, ministers decided on the bolder course, but they lost, in doing so, the co-operation of three secretaries of State, Lord Cranborne (afterwards Lord Salisbury), Lord Carnarvon and General Peel. The franchise, designed to give the artisans "participation without predominance" in political power, was to be widened as well as lowered. Besides the "vertical" or downward extension of it, there were to be "lateral" or fancy franchises, in order to give compensating strength to the middle and upper classes. And it was because they regarded this compensation as illusory that Cranborne and his colleagues resigned.

Disraeli's Franchise Bill

The bill which Disraeli introduced into the House of Commons on the 18th of March, 1867, was a much more generous measure than Gladstone's bill which he had helped to destroy in 1866. It would have given the vote to every rate-paying householder in boroughs and to householders rated at £15 in counties. The "lateral" franchises were to be given to those who paid £1 a year in direct taxation, or had £30 in the savings bank, or possessed certain educational qualifications. And those qualified by payment of direct taxation might use a taxpayer's vote not in substitution for a household vote but in addition to it. Gladstone disliked unlimited household suffrage, but he disliked the other features of the bill much

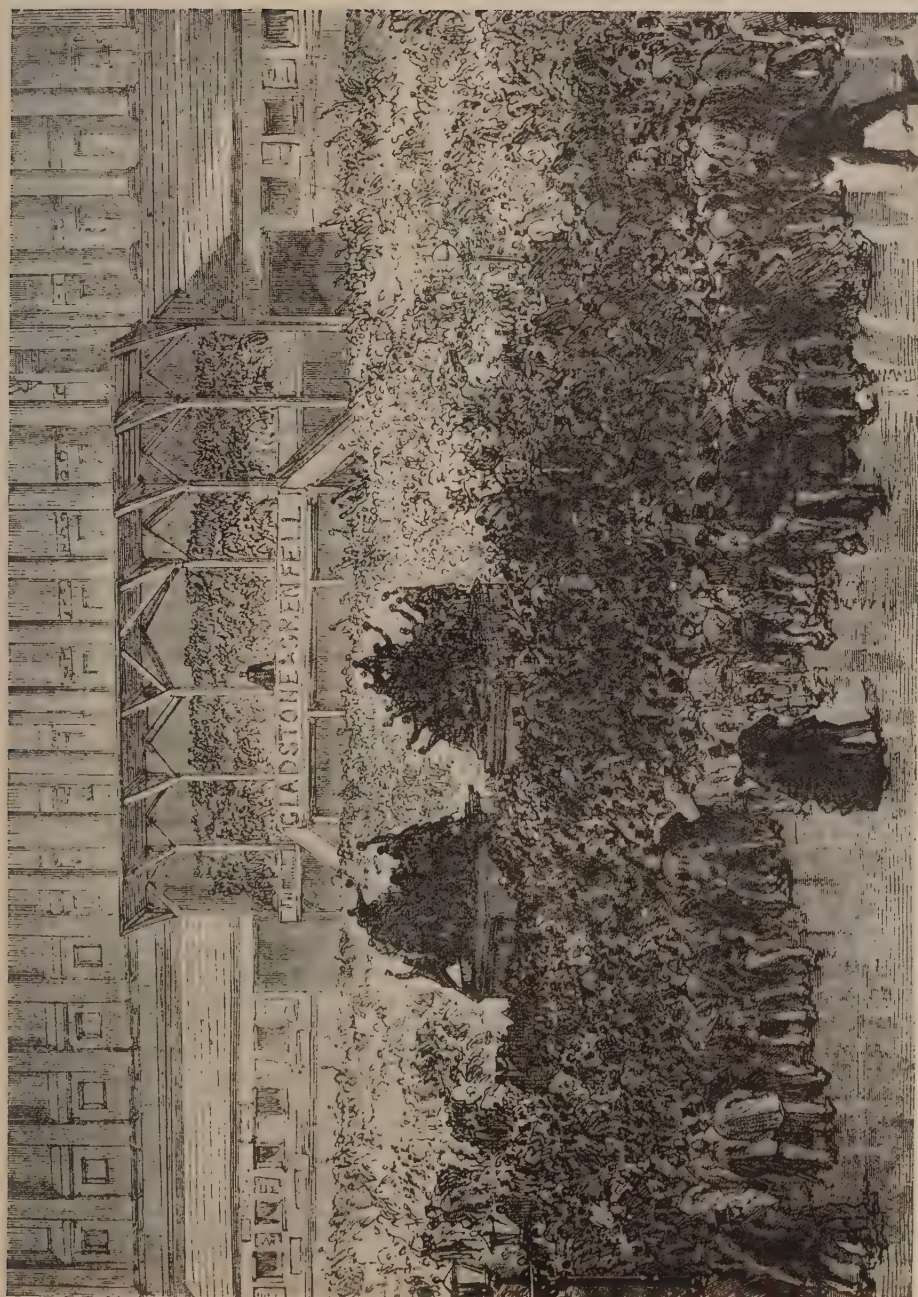
more. For a moment he thought of resisting the bill as a whole. But ultimately the opposition preferred to remodel the bill, until it had, in Gladstone's words, made "a good bill out of a bad bill." It was said jokingly that Gladstone and Bright left of the original bill nothing but the first word, "whereas."*

Establishment of Household Suffrage

Before the bill became an act "fancy" or "lateral" franchises had disappeared; a lodger qualification had been introduced; and the county rating qualification had been lowered from £15 to £12. But one difficulty was not fully solved. Thousands of small occupiers in the towns paid their landlords an inclusive sum for rent and rates. In the eyes of rating authorities the landlord was the ratepayer, and the occupier would, therefore, have no qualification for a vote. To meet this difficulty the system of compounding, as it is called, was abolished in parliamentary boroughs; the householders, being required to pay their rates direct to the collecting authority, were consequently entitled to a vote. But the abolition of compounding proved so inconvenient to occupiers and rate-collectors that in 1869 means had to be devised for reviving the practice without taking the vote from the householder. A useful but not sufficiently extensive measure of redistribution accompanied the changes of franchise, and reform followed in Scotland and Ireland as a corollary to the English act. In Ireland and in the Scottish counties the franchise was slightly narrower than in England. But Scotland made one important gain. Some small English boroughs were disfranchised in order to give members to populous towns in Scotland.

In Carlyle's phrase, we had "shot Niagara." Household suffrage had been established in the boroughs virtually without limitation. Hence there were many sore hearts on the Conservative side. In 1867, said one who deplored "the Conservative surrender," the Conservatives "having just tasted the first-fruits of office after a long

* Another small reform was effected in 1868, when the trial of election petitions was transferred to a rota of judges.

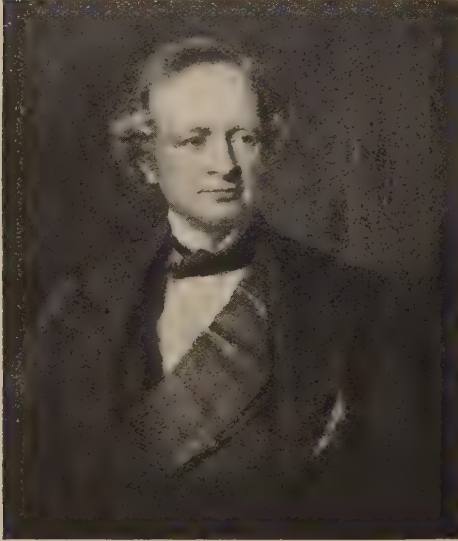


THE SOUTH-WEST LANCASHIRE ELECTION OF 1868: THE NOMINATION

From "The Illustrated London News."

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and dreary fast . . . were not in a condition to withstand temptation." * Disraeli was taunted with inconsistency and accused of selling the pass. But the persistence in Disraeli of his early strain of Radicalism is more marked than his inconsistency. He was more open to attack for the tortuous processes of "legerdemain" and manceuvre by which he had led his party to accept a sweeping measure of reform. On the whole



LORD GRANVILLE

Reproduced, by courtesy of Messrs. Colnaghi & Co., from the Engraving (1895-12-14-129, published 1879) in the British Museum, by T. L. Atkinson, after the Painting by George Richmond, R.A.

the party supported him and politicians generally were glad that, after half a generation of plans and arguments and recurrent stalemate, the problem of the suffrage had at last been resolved for a season. Derby advised his followers to make the best of a doubtful bargain, admitting that it was "a great experiment," "a leap in the dark." "Don't you see," he said privately, "how it has dished the Whigs?" †

After reform came the Irish problem. A turn had been reached in the affairs of Ireland which compelled British statesmen

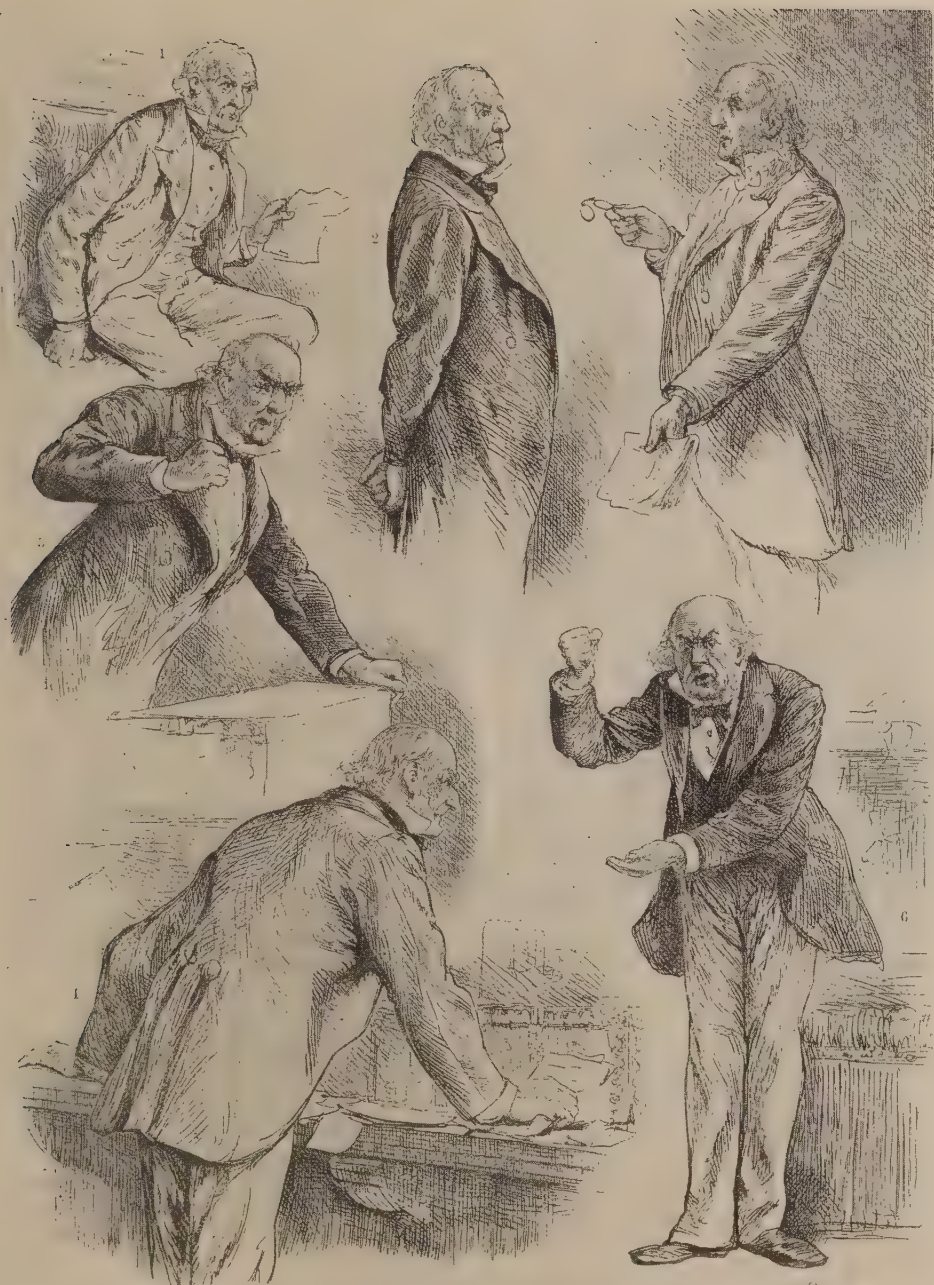
* *Life of Salisbury*, i, 285.

† For the two opposing Conservative views of the struggle, see Buckle's *Disraeli*, iv, ch. 14 and 15, and Lady Gwendolen Cecil's *Salisbury*, i, ch. 9 and 10.

to give tardy heed to the grievances of its people. During 1866 and 1867 there had been a resurgence of Fenianism. American Fenians had invaded Canada, and were not repulsed until blood had been shed. In Ireland the Fenians frequently came into violent conflict with the police. In England it was believed that they had planned an attack on Chester Castle. Fenians rescued some of their comrades from a prison van at Manchester, and during the struggle a sergeant of police was killed. Others blew in part of the wall of Clerkenwell Prison in an attempt to release Fenian prisoners who were confined there. Violence was not successful and Fenianism as Fenianism was a failure. But some of its energy passed into the movement for Home Rule and it did serve to convince many people in England that the time had come to strike at the roots of Irish discontent.

Fenians would have said that the true remedy for the woes of Ireland was to give Irishmen the power to govern themselves and to leave them to solve their own domestic problems in their own way. British statesmen had, as yet, no thought of accepting this drastic remedy for Irish difficulties. They sought instead for means of removing immediate grievances, the defects of the land law and the discontents arising from the privileged position of the English Church in Ireland.

Five out of six of the Irish cultivators were without the security of a lease; they were easily evicted and received no compensation for improvements; they were rack-rented by middlemen and had seldom direct access to landlords, who were often persistent absentees; and while tenants were without encouragement to improve their holdings, they were, if evicted, without resource, since there was seldom any employment alternative to the cultivation of the land. In Ulster the custom of tenant-right gave the tenant some security of tenure and assured an outgoing tenant of compensation for improvements from his successor. In 1845 the Devon Commission had proposed that this custom should be extended to the rest of Ireland. Lord Derby himself (then Lord Stanley) had



MR. GLADSTONE'S ATTITUDES WHEN ADDRESSING THE HOUSE

1. "Catching the Speaker's eye." 2. Beginning his speech. 3. Referring to a document. 4. Adopting a conversational tone. 5 and 6. Smiting an opponent.

Sketches from Life, by Harry Furniss, September, 1881.

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sought in vain to enact the proposal in a modified form. Similar attempts had since been made, but when successful in the Commons they had failed in the Lords, until 1860 when Cardwell's Act had given the tenant compensation for improvements made with the landlord's consent, but had, at the same time, made evictions easier. It was perhaps fortunate that Cardwell's Act had remained "practically a dead letter."

Disestablishment in Ireland

Political battles had been fought about the position of the English Church in Ireland for forty years. The Church was a great corporation, it had been served by many distinguished men, and it engaged extensive revenues, but it had never commanded the allegiance of more than a small minority of the people. It did not minister to more than one in eight of the population of Ireland, for while the Catholics predominated in the south and west, the Presbyterians were strong in Ulster. Staunch Protestants and vigorous defenders of the Church of England were by no means agreed that the maintenance of the privileged position of the Church in Ireland did real service to their cause. In the later years of the Palmerston ministry Liberals had only been prevented by Palmerston's opposition from putting an end to the establishment.

Gladstone had converted himself, not without reluctance, to the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, as well as to a reform of the land laws. During the debates on the Reform Bill his party had often fallen asunder and had sometimes revolted against his leadership, but it rallied to the support of his Irish policy. In 1868 Gladstone moved resolutions in favour of disestablishment, and ministers did not venture upon uncompromising opposition. They were themselves divided, for while the home secretary spoke vigorously in defence of the Church, Lord Stanley declared that "probably not one educated person in a hundred" could support the existing system without qualification. Ministers sought, therefore, to avoid a decision on the main question. But they were defeated and Gladstone's resolutions were carried by large majorities. As soon

as a general election could take place on the new franchise, parliament was dissolved. The Conservatives were heavily defeated at the polls. Disraeli resigned without meeting parliament, and Gladstone was called upon to form a cabinet.

Gladstone as Prime Minister

Into his first administration Gladstone gathered all the elements of the new Liberalism. In the Liberal leader's own person the Canningite and Peelite strains were merged. Cardwell was a Peelite and Argyll was the disciple of Peelites. Ripon was a Canningite by inheritance and a Liberal by conviction. Granville and Hartington, Clarendon, Spencer and Halifax had been bred in the Whig tradition. Bright, the cotton manufacturer, and Hatherley, the son of a London hop merchant, were, in the official sense, new men. Lowe and Childers, both sons of country clergymen, had won their first political experience in the self-governing states of the Commonwealth. But though the strength of the ministry, great and varied as it was, represented more exactly than most Whig or Liberal ministries all the elements of strength in the party behind it, Gladstone was not skilful in the disposition of his powerful forces. Cardwell at the war office and Clarendon as foreign secretary were well placed and were conspicuously successful. But Lowe, an able and experienced man, proved an awkward colleague and a blundering chancellor of the exchequer, while Bright, with all his splendid gifts, was, as he well knew, no administrator.* It was partly because the cabinet was clumsily fitted together that it disappointed in the event some of the hopes which it inspired.

"We shall have an era of excitement very unlike the quiet indifference of the Palmerstonian era"—wrote an English man of letters to his American readers; "and if no unexpected contingencies occur, I think we may have sanguine hopes that the fermentation will end before long in producing a far better social and political state of things

* See the letter, doubting and almost pathetic, in *The Public Letters of John Bright*, p. 148, in which Bright explains that he accepted office under pressure.

THE IRISH LAND ACT, 1870

than we have lately enjoyed.”* The first important measure of the new ministry disestablished the English Church in Ireland, partially disendowed it, and handed over its government to a new body, with power to administer its revenues and patronage. The bill passed the Commons by large majorities, but in the Lords it was amended out of recognition. Whereas the bill, as it left the Commons, would have taken from the Church nine million pounds and left it ten, the bill as it returned to the Commons would have left it fifteen and deprived it of four. Gladstone was, however, unrelenting. Most of the Lords’ amendments were rejected, though some financial concessions were made. The Lords thought the concessions insufficient, and were beginning to destroy the bill, when Lord Granville on behalf of the ministry and Lord Cairns on behalf of the opposition arranged a compromise. In its final form the bill left the Church with about eleven million pounds; the eight millions of which it was shorn were to be devoted to the relief of unavoidable suffering in such manner as parliament should thereafter direct. And from the 1st of January, 1871, the Church in Ireland, severed from the Church in England, became an independent corporation. To its opponents disestablishment was sacrilege and robbery. Its supporters hoped that it might help, with other measures, to bring peace to Ireland. In the event fears and hopes were alike falsified. The Church lost money but it gained strength. And although an ancient grievance was removed the peace of Ireland was not attained.

Nor did Gladstone’s attempt to grapple with the land problem prove more fortunate. The Irish Land Act of 1870 gave the force of law to the Ulster custom of tenant-right and to other analogous customs. With limitations the same principle was applied to the rest of Ireland, and tenants were to be compensated for eviction and for improvements. But the eviction clauses were open to abuse. The scale of compensation invited evasions. And as the tenant who fell behind with his rent could claim no compensation for eviction, it was easy for the unscrupulous land-

lord to rack-rent him into poverty and eject him without compensation for eviction. The Lords disliked the bill. Even a Conservative peer who was in general scrupulously fair-minded could not see that a tenant had any more right to the improvements on his holding than a cook to the dinner she had prepared. If the Lords had



W. E. FORSTER

From a Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company.

done as they wished they would have destroyed the bill. They contented themselves with making amendments which the Commons rejected. Some prominent members of the House of Lords wished to resist the Commons. “If we make any substantial retreat . . .” wrote Salisbury, “our future position in the constitution will be purely decorative.”† But the Conservative leaders gave no encouragement to these irreconcilables and the Land Bill was enacted substantially as the Commons had framed it.

While Gladstone was busied with Irish

* *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, pp. 164-5.

† *Life of Salisbury*, ii, p. 25.

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land, other members of the cabinet were attempting to devise a national system of education. Without such a system, it was felt, the new franchise would prove a mockery. "Our future masters" must, in Lowe's sneering phrase, be compelled "to learn their letters." Bright often declared that the franchise was itself the great edu-

Forster, and upon him fell the main burden of preparing an education bill. Forster was "a thoroughly genuine and independent character,"* honest, energetic, and devoted, but neither tactful nor persuasive. Impressed by the urgent need of reaching the uneducated children, he may have sacrificed the future to the needs of the moment. His



MEETING OF THE ARBITRATORS IN THE ALABAMA CLAIMS AT GENEVA

Count Sclopis
(Italy).

M. Stämpfli
(Switzerland).

Baron d'Itajuba
(Brazil).

Sir A. Cockburn
(Great Britain).

Mr. C. F. Adams
(United States).

From a contemporary Wood-engraving.

cator; but it was a great educator that required systematic help. Voluntary effort had already done much, but not enough. About a third of the children of the nation received a useful but narrow education, another sixth attended schools of doubtful efficiency, and the rest were not taught at all. To find schools for the neglected children was a problem which bristled with difficulties.

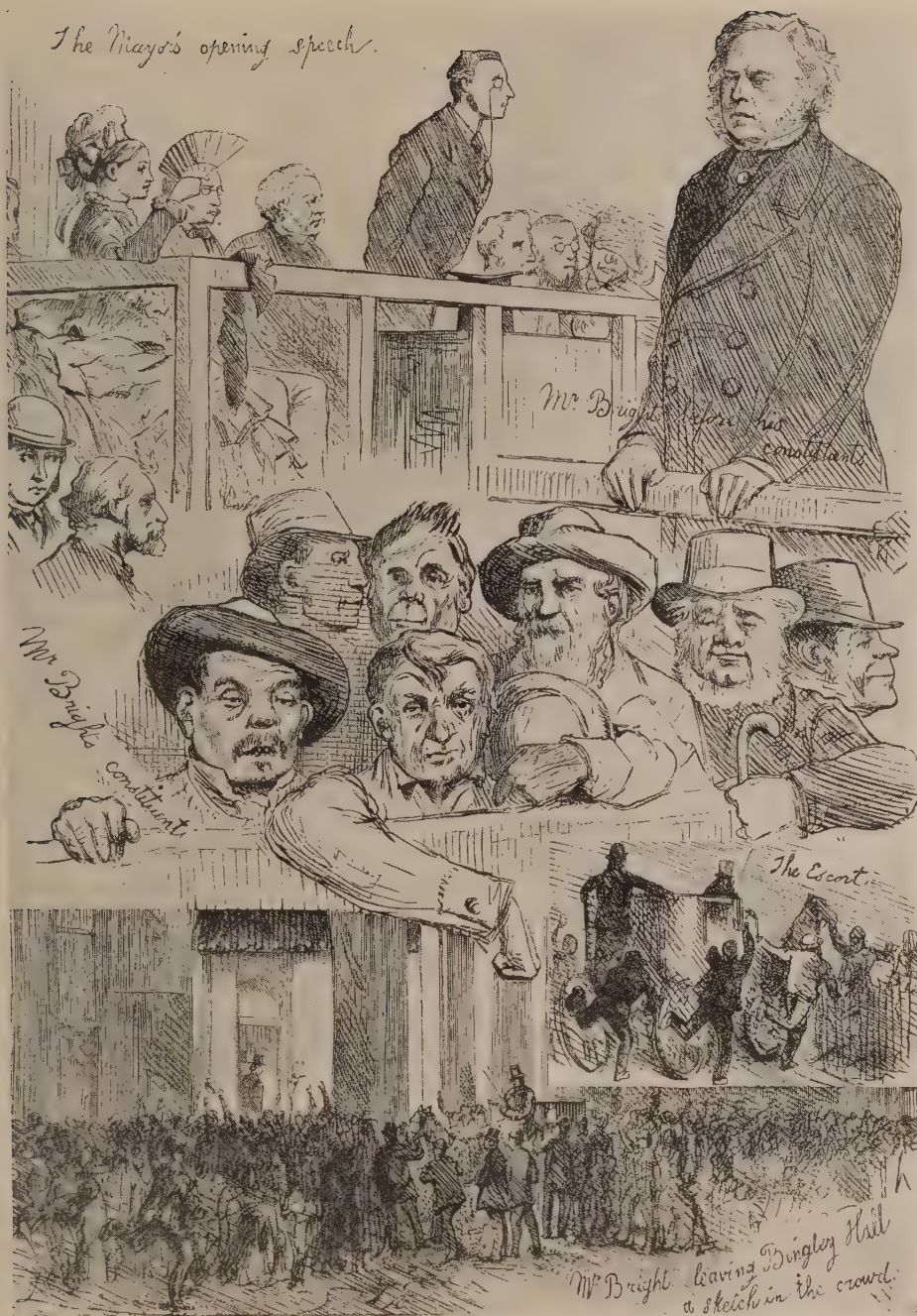
The vice-president of the council, then responsible for subjects as incongruous as education and the cattle plague, was W. E.

dominant anxiety was "to fill up the gaps" left by the voluntary system and "leave no children without a chance of education, whilst at the same time making the best of the existing machinery."† His bill was, therefore, a patchwork. The act of 1870 divided the country into school districts. Where—but only where—the voluntary schools were not equal to the educational

* Gladstone's words, quoted in *Life of Forster*, i, 1.

† *Life of Forster*, i, 446, 462; on the Education Bill generally, see ch. 11 and 12.

The Mayor's opening speech.



ELECTION SCENES AT BIRMINGHAM

From "The Illustrated London News," February 6th, 1875.

needs of their district, elected school boards were charged with the duty of providing and maintaining the necessary schools. The income of these boards from fees and grants was to be supplemented from the rates. Voluntary schools were still to depend largely upon subscriptions, but were to be helped more generously than hitherto by the exchequer. This machinery was defective, but it promised to bring a school of some kind within reach of every child. It marked a genuine recognition of public responsibility for elementary education.

In two respects the act was disappointing. It did not make elementary education uniformly free or generally compulsory. School boards had a discretionary power to remit fees in the schools which they maintained; and they might pay the fees of scholars in voluntary schools whose parents could not afford them. Until school accommodation had been largely increased it was perhaps premature to make attendance everywhere compulsory, but each school board could draft rules requiring the attendance of children between the ages of five and thirteen. Imperfect as the act may have been, it was still a mighty engine of improvement. Within half a generation the provision of schools and teachers had trebled, and the number of children in inspected schools had risen from eleven hundred and fifty thousand to little short of three millions and a half.

Sectarian Controversy

Over the bill there raged hot controversy, for "the denominationalists wanted more money, and the champions of a national system wanted more control." Some disliked the attempt to provide unsectarian instruction in the Bible in board schools, others thundered against favours to voluntary schools. Some held that the payment from the rates of the fees of poor children in voluntary schools was an indirect subsidy to denominational bodies; others maintained that children might be indoctrinated with religious opinions which their parents abhorred. To some extent the fear of proselytism was allayed. In board schools "no catechism or religious formulæ" distinctive of any particular denomination was to

be taught. Parents were allowed to withdraw their children altogether from religious instruction, which had to be given at such hours as to enable children to be absent from it without hindrance to their education in secular subjects. But neither Catholics nor Nonconformists were satisfied. And the Nonconformists were a great power in the Liberal party. Forster was accused of yielding too much to the voluntarists, and of carrying the bill by the votes of his political opponents. It was long before the bitterness of these resentments was assuaged, and though the bill was of incalculable benefit to the nation, it was a disaster for the ministry which promoted it.

Britain's Neutrality in 1870

The foreign policy of the ministry had then, and has had since, as many critics as defenders. Gladstone distrusted continental entanglements. Absorbed in domestic reform, he strove for peace, though some have thought that he bought it at too high a price. In 1870 France found herself arrayed against the united might of Germany. Granville had just succeeded Clarendon at the foreign office. When his efforts to stay the contest proved vain, Britain stood neutral. Since she was roundly abused by each combatant for leaning towards the other, it may be fairly assumed that her neutrality was well maintained. Her chief concern was for the safety of Belgium. Granville skilfully made use of the situation to secure from each combatant a treaty giving to Belgium a special guarantee of territorial integrity for the period of war and for twelve months afterwards. A little later, similar means were adopted for the protection of Luxemburg. British opinion, at first distrustful of France, afterwards veered round and became distrustful of Bismarck. But while British influence was always used on the side of peace, Granville stood firm against importunity and refused to intervene on behalf of France at the cost of war.*

Bismarck had done his best to see that Britain should be well occupied with her own concerns. He encouraged Russia to

* *Life of Granville*, ii, ch. 2. *Life of Lyons*, i, ch. 8 and 9.

THE BALLOT ACT

take advantage of European confusion and to denounce the clauses in the treaty of 1856 which prevented her from keeping an effective fleet in the Black Sea. These clauses were worth little, but the sanctity of treaties was worth much, and if any power could, at a convenient moment, denounce a treaty which it disliked, the sanctity of treaties would be an unmeaning phrase. Granville insisted on the withdrawal of Russia's claim to take the law into her own hands, and secured an admission that treaties could only be abrogated with the consent of the contracting powers. He then gave way about the Black Sea clauses, but secured in compensation an increase in Turkey's power to control the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. That this provision was worth much to Britain, or even devoid of danger, may now be doubted, but Granville acted in accordance with a tradition to which British statesmen of both political parties adhered then and for some time afterwards.

Arbitration on the *Alabama* Claims

Bitterness between Britain and the United States had been fostered ever since the Civil War by a tangle of differences, some of them of long standing. These disagreements were peculiarly unfortunate at a moment of European turmoil. Before Granville had been long at the foreign office he told Bright that he was "taking several bites at that big cherry—reconciliation with the States." Questions relating to the navigation of the St. Lawrence, Lake Michigan, and other waterways, disputed fishing rights, and a contested boundary were settled either by agreement or by reference to arbitration, but there still remained the vast demands of the United States known as the *Alabama* claims. These Great Britain agreed to refer to a body of five arbitrators named by Italy, Switzerland, Brazil, Britain and the United States. Some of the more extravagant claims of the United States were rejected. But in 1872 for the depredations of three privateers, of which the *Alabama* is the most famous, the arbitrators awarded to the United States compensation amounting to over three million pounds. The award was probably right in principle, but exces-

sive in amount. Yet it would not have been too high a price for assured friendship between the two great English-speaking peoples.*

Achievements of Liberal Ministry

Governments, it has been said, begin to die as soon as they begin to live, and the heroic strength of the Gladstone ministry was already failing. Yet its achievements were considerable. In 1869 Forster had carried the Endowed Schools Bill, whereby the grammar schools of the country were reorganized and the income of 3,000 foundations, amounting to close on £600,000 a year, was made more effectively available for its purpose. In 1871 "divers restrictions, tests and disabilities" in the universities were abolished; dissenters were admitted to lay fellowships and to a share in university government. In 1870 the higher branches of the civil service in most public offices (the foreign office being an important exception) were thrown open to competition by examination. Cardwell, with remarkable administrative skill, accomplished the belated work of reorganizing the army. For a time the spending departments were resolutely economical, and Lowe was able, after clearing off an inherited deficit, to effect considerable reductions in expenditure. In 1872 the Ballot Act was at last placed on the statute book. What elections lost in picturesque disorder they gained in fairness, and there were many for whom secret voting transformed the franchise of 1867 from a sham into a reality. Selborne's Judicature Act, passed in 1873, at last disentangled the confusion of the law-courts, and by reforming their practice enlarged their usefulness.

Since 1870, however, the popularity of the ministry had been steadily on the wane, and by 1873 its power was crumbling. Non-conformists had not forgiven the Education Act of 1870. Bruce's Licensing Act (1872) had excited the hostility of powerful interests. Classes no less influential resented the abolition of the sale and purchase of commissions in the army (1871). Trade unionists, wearied by long neglect, were bitterly disappointed when an act (1871) to protect their funds was accompanied by

* *Life of Granville*, ii, ch. 3.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

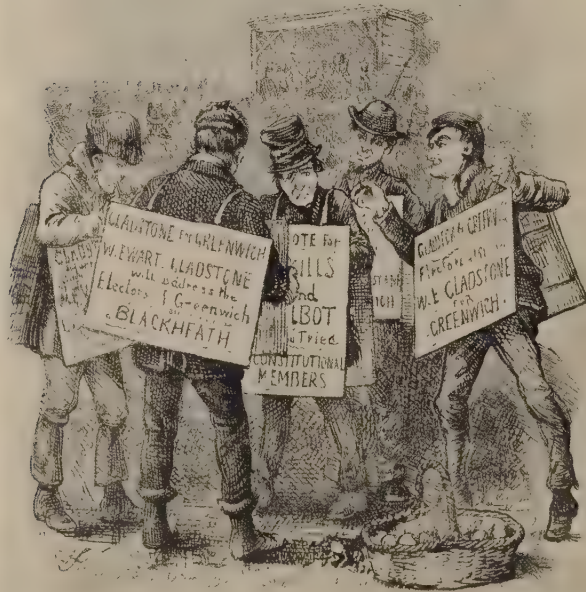
restrictions which made illegal in furtherance of a strike acts which were not otherwise illegal. They lost faith in ministers who thought it right to allow employers to prevent a trade unionist from finding work by placing him on a black-list, but wrong to use pickets to warn blacklegs against breaking a strike. For want of a sympathetic understanding of the difficulties of trade unionism ministers lost their command of the suffrages of the working-classes.

In administration the government had not been more fortunate than in legislation. The admiralty had fallen into discredit through blunders in naval construction, and the first lord had to bear the blame for the faults of his technical advisers. Lowe had lost his early popularity at the exchequer since his luckless proposal in 1871 of a tax on matches. The Irish administration had proved unimaginative and unfortunate. Public opinion set somewhat unfairly against

Granville's conduct of foreign affairs, and the Geneva award was damaging to the ministry. When Gladstone was defeated in March, 1873, on a bill to extend university education in Ireland, which satisfied neither Catholics nor Protestants, he seized the opportunity to resign.

Disraeli's popularity had increased as Gladstone's had diminished. But, though willing enough to poke fun at the ministry, Disraeli was not yet ready to replace it. He had no mind to repeat again his old and bitter experience of office without power, and he declined to form a cabinet. Gladstone had perforce to remain in office, but troubles fell thick upon him, and blunder after blunder was made in administration. In August the ministry was reconstructed, but Gladstone and his colleagues were weary and had lost their old authority. Gladstone himself had returned to the scene of his former triumphs at the exchequer, and planned a great

revision of taxation. Direct taxation was to be reduced by the extinction of the income-tax, and indirect taxation by the repeal of the sugar duty. To accomplish these changes drastic economies were required in the spending departments. Neither Goschen at the admiralty nor Cardwell at the war office felt warranted in making the sweeping reductions upon which Gladstone's plan depended for success. Gladstone abandoned the struggle with recalcitrant colleagues and a rebellious party. In January, 1874, he advised the queen to dissolve parliament, and he appealed to the country. But a ministry which had exasperated its friends without conciliating hostile interests had little to hope for at the polls. The verdict went decisively against it, and for the first time since the repeal of the Corn Laws a Conservative majority was returned to the House of Commons.



GLADSTONE'S ELECTIONEERING CAMPAIGN, 1874: A SCENE ON BLACKHEATH

From "The Graphic," February 7th, 1874.

CHAPTER XX

DISRAELI AND GLADSTONE (1874-85)

AMID all the diverse political activities of the time it is possible to trace a natural unity in the years between 1874 and 1885. They are stamped with the impress of the urban householder, whose franchise was first made completely effective by the ballot (1872) in the general election of 1874, and whose power was not shared until 1885 with his social equals in the counties. These were the years when that personal domination of the rival leaders, first of Disraeli and then of Gladstone, which Bagehot had detected, not without misgiving, as far back as 1868, was most absolute, and perhaps least questioned. They were years when attention was incessantly diverted from home affairs to foreign policy, and the future of the nearer or the further East, now of the Balkans, of Turkey, and of Russia, now of Egypt or of Afghanistan, were closely linked with our own; and yet they were years when the frontiers of the State were pushed steadily forward by Conservative and by Liberal ministers alike, and the functions of government were persistently enlarged. And these years were marked also by the tardy awakening of a sense of imperial responsibility and power which was to grow as the century neared its close, and to mature in the twentieth century into the wider conception of a British Commonwealth of Nations.

In the elections of 1874 there were several significant features. Not merely were the Conservatives returned with a commanding majority, but they owed much of their success to the urban artisan, that "Conservative working-man" in whose existence Disraeli, almost alone among party leaders, had hitherto believed. The Conservatives had a majority of very nearly fifty in the



SCENE AT THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1874: WORKING MEN VOTING BY BALLOT DURING THE DINNER-HOUR

From "The Illustrated London News," February 14th, 1874.

Commons.* But their working strength was still greater, for a new portent had appeared in Ireland. Isaac Butt had revived the agitation for the repeal of the Union under the more attractive name of Home Rule, and his partisans had met with unexpected success at the polls. They had won a few seats from Conservatives,

* There were 350 Conservatives in a house of 652.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

but they had gained many more from Liberals." The Home Rulers now came to Westminster 57 strong; the Irish Liberals were reduced to a dozen; and the new party, though it was against the government, could only be counted upon to vote with the Liberals when it was clear that by doing so it could promote its own aims. Over the next ten years there fell the lengthening shadow of Home Rule.

Disraeli's Triumph and Regret

Disraeli's real parliamentary strength was, therefore, even greater than it appeared on a mere counting of heads. His party, flushed with victory but conscious of its debt to his adroit leadership, was loyal as never before. Disraeli's was the triumph and his the division of the spoils. When the queen, who did not conceal her pleasure, called upon him to form a cabinet, he had for the first time a free hand, and was able to gather around him a capable body of ministers. Cairns, the lord chancellor, and Salisbury at the India office were scarcely inferior to their chief. Carnarvon had imagination, Derby had knowledge if not decision, Northcote was a master of figures, and Gathorne Hardy was an indomitable fighter in debate. Cross showed at the home office a rare genius for administration. And the remaining members of the cabinet were all men of experience. For subordinate offices Disraeli was able to secure many younger politicians of ability and promise, and he could, for the first time in his career as a minister, meet parliament with full confidence in the skill of his lieutenants.

Though the Conservative party delighted in its new sense of strength and power, the elation of its chief was tempered by regrets. For him the triumph had come too late. He was nearing seventy and no longer bore the years lightly. He was ill and weary. His wife's death in 1873 had shattered his home, and he was often lonely and dispirited. Nor was the public unity of his party always reflected in the privacy of the cabinet. Salisbury and Carnarvon, alienated by the "Conservative surrender" in 1867, had only buried the hatchet in time to take office. Salisbury still complained in 1874 of the

prime minister's fatal habit of giving more consideration to the one trimmer who needed humouring than to the ninety and nine staunch men who needed no persuasion.* Yet want of control rather than want of agreement proved the undoing of the ministry. "Lord Beaconsfield was very old and worn when he got to the top of the tree, and he was but indifferently served by some of his colleagues," wrote Randolph Churchill afterwards; disease "compelled him to give way to a disposition naturally indolent and unsuited to the constant mastery of dry administrative detail."† It is neither possible nor desirable that a prime minister should master the "dry administrative detail" of every office; his business is with general direction and control. Yet if Disraeli could have maintained his old watchfulness his departmental chiefs might have been restrained from many errors. It was not indolence but physical exhaustion which compelled him to relax his vigilance.

Conservatives and Social Problems

In 1874 the electors had voted against their dislikes rather than in favour of their desires. If they had voted for anything positive it had been for rest and tranquillity. They had agreed with the spirit of Disraeli's condemnations, rather extravagantly expressed, of the ministers who had "harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution and species of property in the country."‡ In his election manifesto Disraeli had advocated "a little more energy in our foreign policy, and a little less in our domestic legislation."§ This was a forecast as well as a criticism, though it does less than justice to Disraeli's intentions and achievements. His conduct of foreign affairs may have passed beyond energy to restlessness, but if his ministry avoided political legislation it attacked with new vigour those social problems of which, since he laboured thirty years before upon *Sybil*, he had shown an appreciation uncommon in politicians.

Disraeli believed that the artisan valued

* *Life of Salisbury*, ii, 63-4.

† *Lord Randolph Churchill*, i, 112-13.

‡ *The Bath Letter*, Buckle, v, 262.

§ *Ib.*, 275.

CHARTER OF TRADE UNIONISM

the franchise less as a political gift than as a social security. He wanted liberty to bargain with his employer after his own fashion; he wanted legal safeguards for reasonable working conditions; and he wanted a guarantee of better houses and decent surroundings. Disraeli returned the confidence which the artisans had given him at the polls. Two acts of 1875 remedied the defects of which trade unionists had complained in the industrial legislation of 1871. The actions of workmen during a trade dispute were no longer to be a crime unless they would have been illegal in other circumstances. Nor was a breach of agreement between master and man to be henceforth counted a crime on the workman's part yet a mere breach of civil contract on the employer's. Master and servant were to be equally liable in case of default to defend an action in the civil courts for breach of contract. These acts, together with the protection afforded to the funds of trade unions in 1871, constituted a charter of trade unionism for the rest of the century.

Legislation for Workers

This "charter" was mainly the work of the home secretary, Mr. R. A. Cross, in whom Disraeli found a fair and sagacious exponent of his social policy. In 1874 Cross also carried a bill limiting the hours of labour in the factories of the textile trade to 56 in a week, and imposing new restrictions on the employment of young children. In 1878 the growing mass of legislation in regard to workshops and factories was codified, and its operation was extended. These acts had their defects, but though they were criticized by doctrinaire Radicals, it was usually for the wrong reasons, and working-class opinion was at one with Shaftesbury's when he declared that two millions of people would bless the day when Cross was appointed home secretary. Another and neglected class of workmen, the merchant seamen, championed by Samuel Plimsoll, whom Disraeli called "a Moody and Sankey in politics," received protection by the Merchant Shipping Act (1876) against the risk of being sent to sea in unseaworthy or overladen ships.*

* A temporary measure of 1875 authorized the board of trade to detain unseaworthy ships.

Another measure, the Friendly Societies Act (1875), was designed to encourage thrift and protect savings by securing proper audit and sound administration without interfering with the power of the members to manage their own affairs.

Housing and Public Health

In 1875 Cross carried a bill, which was likely, Disraeli told the queen, "to be a very popular and beneficial measure," enabling corporations to acquire land by compulsory purchase, to raze insanitary property, and to build workmen's dwellings in the neighbourhood of those demolished. Local authorities in Scotland and Ireland and urban sanitary authorities in England were soon afterwards given similar powers. In 1879 an amending act made it more difficult for owners of insanitary property to profit by their neglect, and also enabled local authorities, where expedient, to house displaced occupiers elsewhere than in the neighbourhood of demolished rookeries.† Another measure, the Public Health Act of 1875, simplified and consolidated the confusion of laws under which, since 1848, the country had gradually been covered with a network of authorities whose business it was to take precautions against disease and to find securities for public health. If the public everywhere needed pure water, efficient drains and habitable houses, the townsfolk were vitally interested in the preservation of open spaces. In 1876 new enclosures of commons were forbidden unless they could be shown to be in the public interest and an act of 1878 preserved Epping Forest as a breathing place for the crowded population of the East End.

These social reforms constituted, as Disraeli boasted, "a policy round which the country can rally." "The Conservative Party," declared a Labour leader in 1879, "have done more for the working-classes in five years than the Liberals have in fifty." This judgment contains much truth though it unduly minimizes the debt of Conservative ministers to the preparatory legislation of earlier years. In the Education Act of 1876, Lord Sandon unquestionably built upon the

† Clarke, *The Housing Problem*, pp. 5-11.

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foundations laid by Forster. In many respects his bill was merely an interpretation and enforcement of the act of 1870. But it made clear the obligation of parents to send their children to school until they were at least ten, and in certain cases fourteen. It

abolished the rule whereby a fellowship was vacated by the marriage of the holder, threw open many offices to laymen, and made available certain revenues of colleges which were rich, for the educational needs of the universities which were poor. All the hopes of academic reformers were not fulfilled, but some abuses, at least, were effectually removed.

No ministry satisfies everybody, even among its friends and supporters. Brewers and publicans were disappointed to find Mr. Cross only a degree more pliant than his Liberal predecessor, and while the Licensing Act of 1874 relaxed the law to some extent in their favour, it closed public-houses at hours which they considered unreasonably early. The clergy were disappointed, some because ministers did too much, others because they did too little. The Public Worship Regulation Bill (1874) to check ritualistic excesses was not a government measure, but it was forced through parliament by the personal influence of Disraeli, who yielded to public clamour and the urgings of the queen. Strong enough to exasperate High Churchmen, but too feeble to placate the Evangelicals, it did not prevent "rash innovations which destroy the peace of parishes," but it fed the flames of ecclesiastical controversy. And while parish

disputations were being stimulated in England they were being stilled in Scotland by the transfer (1874) from lay patrons to congregations of the patronage of the Established Kirk.

In matters of finance the ministry began well only to end badly. Northcote inherited a handsome surplus. He was able in 1874 to reduce the income-tax to twopence, to abolish the duty on sugar, and to give sub-



BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

From the Painting by Lockhart Bogle, after the original by Sir J. E. Millais, in the National Portrait Gallery.

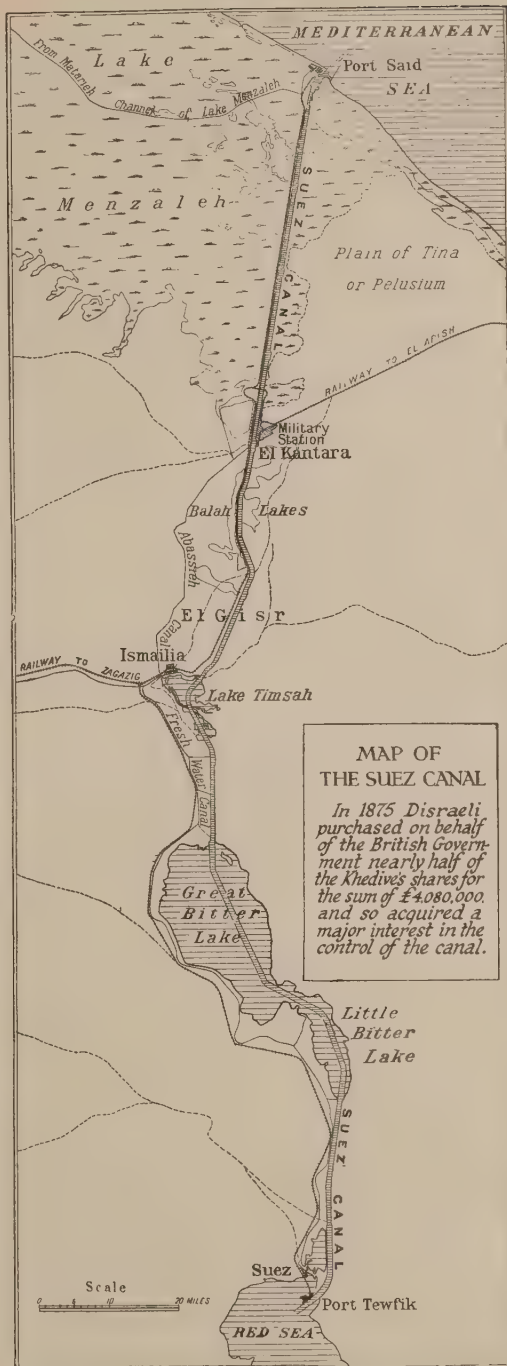
strengthened the means of enforcing attendance and provided machinery for the purpose where none existed. And it transferred to the guardians the duty of paying the fees of scholars whose parents were too poor to pay them. The ministry dealt with the universities as well as with elementary schools. In 1877 commissions were established for the reform of Oxford and Cambridge. They limited the tenure of prize fellowships,

CONTROL OF THE SUEZ CANAL

stantial assistance to rate-payers from the national purse. But in 1875 rising expenditure robbed him of any effective surplus. Next year there was a small deficit. The income-tax rose to threepence, though it was coupled with some relief for men of small incomes. After 1877 Northcote struggled vainly against a sea of difficulties, for military and naval expenditure defied calculation and passed beyond control. In 1878 he raised the income-tax to fivepence, and the duty on tobacco by fourpence a pound. But the rest of his career at the exchequer was a Rake's Progress of accumulated debts and new deficits which he lacked either the courage or the foresight to meet by increased taxation. It was an embarrassed treasury that he surrendered in 1880 to abler hands.

It would be unjust to blame Northcote alone for this rapid descent from prosperity to insolvency, for the fault lay in increasing expenditure rather than in failing revenue. And, as expenditure depends upon policy, he was accountable for it only so far as he shared the collective responsibility of the cabinet for its external policy. In foreign affairs Disraeli was himself the ruling spirit, and in 1878 our foreign policy brought us to the verge of a European war. The rapid advance of Russia through Central Asia had long caused John Bull to suffer periodically from the nightmare of a Russian descent upon India, and now the growth of Russian influence in the Balkan Peninsula awakened yet greater fears.

Since the Crimean War a French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, had wrought a vast change in political and economic geography by constructing the Suez Canal (completed in 1869) and opening a route to India much shorter than the passage round the Cape. Three-quarters of the ships which passed through the canal were British. The security of the road to India was a paramount British interest. Britain could not see the control of the canal



pass to a major power without uneasiness, and the predominant shareholder, the khedive, was insolvent. In 1875, when there seemed some risk of the khedive's shares passing under French control, Disraeli boldly purchased them on behalf of Great Britain, which thereby acquired a controlling interest in the canal. It was an audacious stroke. But the security of the canal required the safety of the Mediterranean. No disturbance in the balance of Mediterranean power could leave Britain unmoved, least of all if the disturber who threatened the sea road to India were Russia, the power which crept ever nearer to its landward gates.

Trouble in the Near East

This is how the situation presented itself to millions of men and women in Britain. And foremost among them were the prime minister and the queen. There was exaggeration—even hysteria—in their dread of Russia. They forgot her weaknesses and took account only of her might. They underestimated the difficulties of a Russian attack upon India. They misinterpreted the Balkan problem. And therefore they upheld Turkey as a bulwark against Russia, even while they were pleading with her on behalf of her misgoverned subjects. But a new spirit was stirring among the peoples of European Turkey. Its impulse came in part from the pan-Slavonic movement, centred in Russia, but its expression was more definitely independent and nationalist than anyone then realized. Russia and Britain were alike mistaken in believing that Russia might direct and control a movement which she could do no more than aid.

In 1875 Bosnia and Herzegovina revolted against the Turk. Next year Serbia and Montenegro joined in the conflict, and there were risings in Bulgaria which were brutally suppressed. An outcry arose in Britain against the "Bulgarian atrocities," and Gladstone talked rashly of ejecting the Turk from Europe "bag and baggage." Ministers used milder language, but they also wished to put an end to Turkish misrule. In his last speech in the Commons before ill-health drove him to the Lords as Earl of Beaconsfield in August, 1876, Disraeli denied that

Britain was bound to uphold the Turks "in any enormity they might commit."* "The Turk's teeth must be drawn, even if he is allowed to live,"† wrote Salisbury to a colleague. But the European powers, distracted by conflicting interests, could make no impression on the Turks, whose policy was now directed by that astute and unscrupulous sultan, Abdul Hamid.

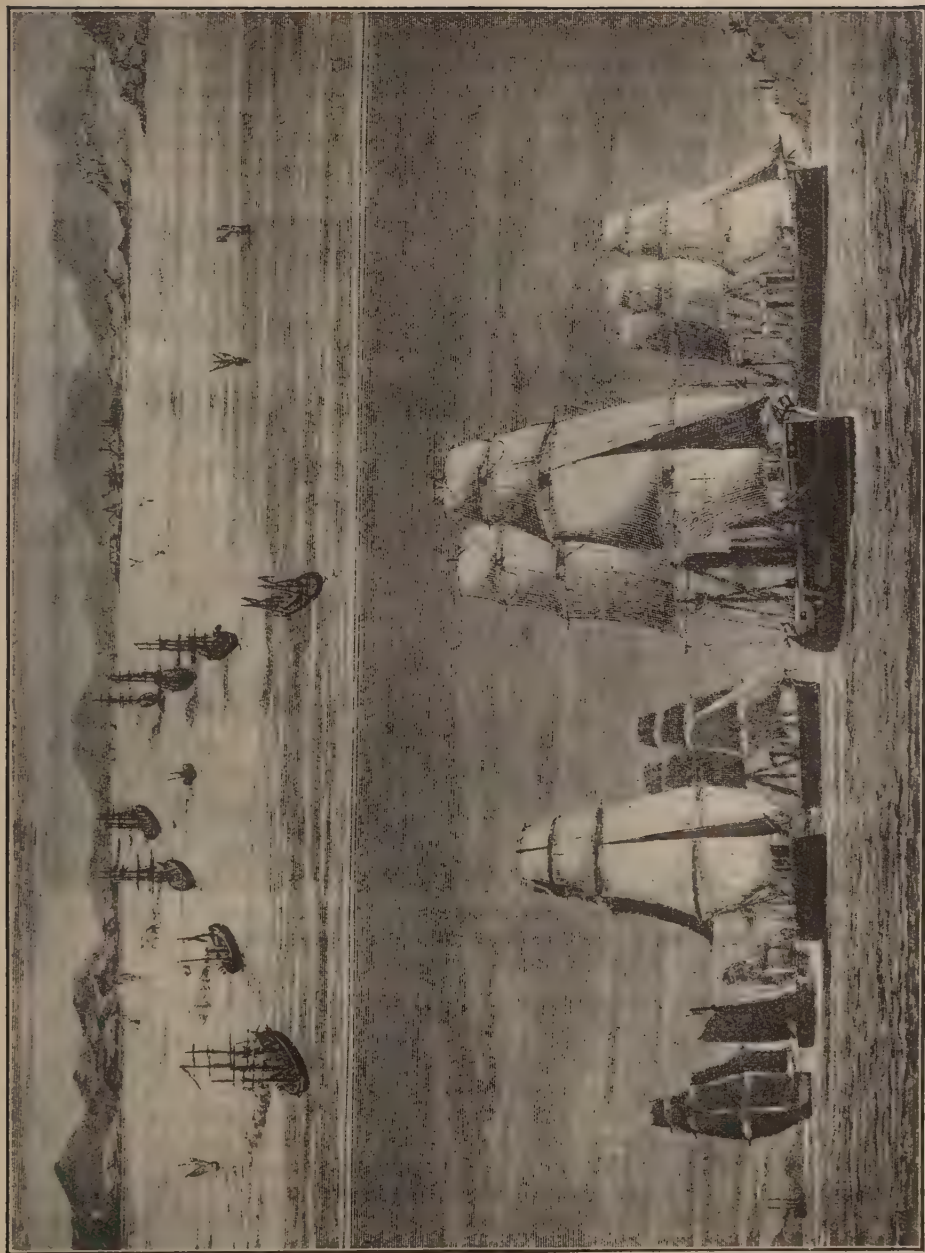
The Constantinople Conference

In September, 1876, the Turks inflicted a smashing defeat on Serbia which encouraged them to resist any proposals for the relief of their Christian subjects. British ministers were in a dilemma. They would not use force against Turkey, which would yield to force alone; but if Turkey did not yield, Russia, acting independently, would coerce her, and might, in so doing, recover her ancient influence. Towards the close of 1876 a conference of the powers assembled at Constantinople. Britain was represented by Salisbury, who found that convincing the Turk was "about as easy a matter as making a donkey canter." To the terms of the powers, as whittled down after negotiations—the restoration of Serbia and Montenegro, with rectified frontiers, the reorganization of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria under governors approved by the powers, and reforms in Turkey under European supervision—the Porte returned an obstinate refusal (January 20th, 1877). In March the powers presented another joint proposal to the Turks. It was summarily rejected. Joint action had failed, and Russia determined to act alone. On April 24th, 1877, she declared war on Turkey.

A year to the day (January 20th, 1878) after the breakdown of the conference at Constantinople, a victorious Russian army entered Adrianople. Russia, it seemed, might dictate her terms to the Porte. In Britain the onward march of the Russian armies had been watched with growing alarm. Public feeling against Russia grew in strength. In October, 1877, it had not risen "to income-tax point," but by December Salisbury complained that "the infernal newspapers"

* Buckle, vi, 47.

† September 21st; *Life of Salisbury*, ii, 84.



THE BRITISH FLEET ON THE WAY TO THE BOSPHORUS, 1878

1. Nearing Kum Kaleh.

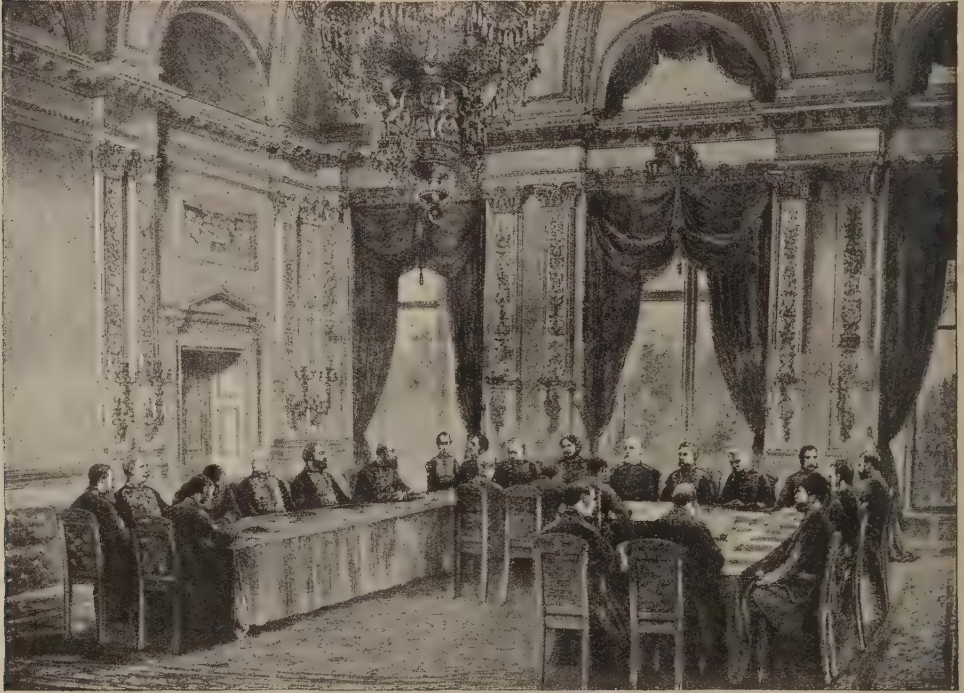
2. Entering the Dardanelles. Ships in full sail (left to right) : *Salamis*, *Ruby*, *Rupert*, *Research*, *Temeraire*, *Swiftsure*, *Sultan*, *Agincourt*. In the upper illustration a ninth ship, the *Holspur* appears in the line.

From "The Graphic," February 16th, 1878.

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were "howling for blood." Excitement grew when the Russians neared Constantinople. The Commons readily granted a vote of credit, and, after many hesitations, British warships were sent to the Bosphorus. Russia and Britain were on the brink of war. And Russia had invited the danger by concealing the movements of her troops and

Russia's settlement with Turkey was not allowed to stand. It was a private arrangement on questions which were the concern of Europe. The powers insisted that the treaty should be submitted to a conference. Russia agreed to the conference, but was willing to submit to it only those articles of the treaty which affected European interests.



A SITTING OF THE BERLIN CONGRESS, JUNE, 1878

Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury were the British Representatives.

From "The Graphic," June 22nd, 1878.

masking the intentions of her diplomatists. "One hour of frankness on Russia's part," wrote Salisbury, "would have avoided the whole imbroglio." Early in March, 1878, Russia imposed her terms upon Turkey in the Treaty of San Stefano. They were more moderate than had been feared, but they included the creation of an inflated Bulgaria. That this would have given the Bulgars dominion over other races than their own excited less concern in Britain than the rise of a new Balkan power, tied to Russia and under the influence of Russian statesmen.

This limitation British statesmen refused to accept. They held that the force of the treaty lay not in its separate provisions but in "their combined effect," which was "to suppress, almost to the point of entire subjection, the political independence of the government of Constantinople." Negotiations for a conference collapsed, and once more the war fever rose high in Britain. The reserves were called out, and arrangements were made to bring a considerable force from India to Malta. Thereupon Lord Derby, the foreign secretary, resigned

RESULTS OF THE BERLIN CONFERENCE

(April 2nd). As is now known, much of the business of his office had been for some time conducted over his head by an inner cabinet of three ministers, Beaconsfield, Cairns and Salisbury; and it was Salisbury who now succeeded Derby as secretary for foreign affairs.

Two months later Salisbury came to a secret understanding with Russia. Britain agreed to the proposed conference, which met at Berlin in June. But its main business was already settled. A month after the meeting of the conference the Treaty of Berlin was signed. Turkey was to pay an indemnity to Russia. Apart from gains in Asia, the only important addition to Russian territory was Bessarabia, unwillingly surrendered by Rumania in return for the Dobruja. Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania, though unsatisfied, each gained an extension of territory, and their independence was explicitly recognized. The administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina was entrusted to Austria, to the ultimate disadvantage of the Habsburg monarchy. There was no "big Bulgaria." About two-fifths of the Bulgaria of San Stefano was given self-government under an elected prince, and the Bulgars of Eastern Rumelia obtained a qualified autonomy under a Christian governor. By a secret bargain with Salisbury the Turks handed over Cyprus to Britain. Few of the achievements of Berlin were enduring, but in the eyes of the British people they were a decisive check to the Russian menace. When Beaconsfield returned, bringing "peace with

honour," he was received with public acclamations. But Salisbury always refused to be judged by his policy in 1878. "I was only picking up," he said, "the china that Derby had broken."*



THE "PAS DE DEUX"

Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury received the Order of the Garter on their return from the Berlin Congress.

From the "Punch" Cartoon of August 3rd, 1878, by permission of the Proprietors.

If Beaconsfield had dissolved soon after the return from Berlin the Conservatives might possibly have swept the country,

* *Life of Salisbury*, ii, 231-2. Case for Salisbury, *ib.*, ii, ch. 4-8; for Beaconsfield, Buckle, vi, ch. 1-9, especially pp. 362-8. For a hostile opinion, presented strongly, but without ill temper, by a writer of Beaconsfield's generation, see Spencer Walpole, *History of Twenty-five Years*, iv, ch. 17 and 18, and especially pp. 170-84. The case for Lord Derby remains to be put.

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though one good judge believed that the ecstatic, but artfully staged, reception of the prime minister was a blunder, and that the wirepullers would "find it out at the polls." The strength of the ministry was already crumbling. It blundered into war in Afghanistan and in Zululand; and into conflict in South Africa, where it annexed the Transvaal. The chancellor of the exchequer "who had begun with riches had ended in want." The prosperity of the early 'seventies was fading. Britain was no longer unchallenged in the industrial markets of the world, and British agriculture was threatened with a new menace from the rich grain-bearing lands of the American West, which were now yielding their fruits to the pioneers who had begun to exploit them in the years after the American Civil War. After the rainy summer and bad harvest of the black year of 1879, the new year opened amidst universal gloom.

Gladstone's Midlothian Campaign

When the general election came in March, 1880, it caught the electors in the temper to blame ministers for everything, from bad budgets to bad harvests, from wars and rumours of war to the malign forces of nature. Rather than have no change the electors would have voted for any change. But the Conservatives had to face an opposition doubly reinforced. Gladstone had resigned the leadership of the Liberal forces in 1875, and had left them to the sensible but tame and unenterprising guidance of Granville and Hartington. Then the Bulgarian atrocities had lured him from Homer and woodcraft to launch his oratorical thunderbolts against Turks and Tories. As he watched ministers piling blunder on blunder he grew daily more eager for battle. In 1879 he was invited to contest a Conservative seat in Scotland—"a tooth and nail affair"—and in November he set out to carry the fiery cross through the Midlothians. That expedition of "discovery and conquest" was no ordinary electoral campaign. Gladstone's fervid denunciations of ministers and their iniquities reached, through the Press, far beyond his hearers to the nation at large, and they shook the government. The second

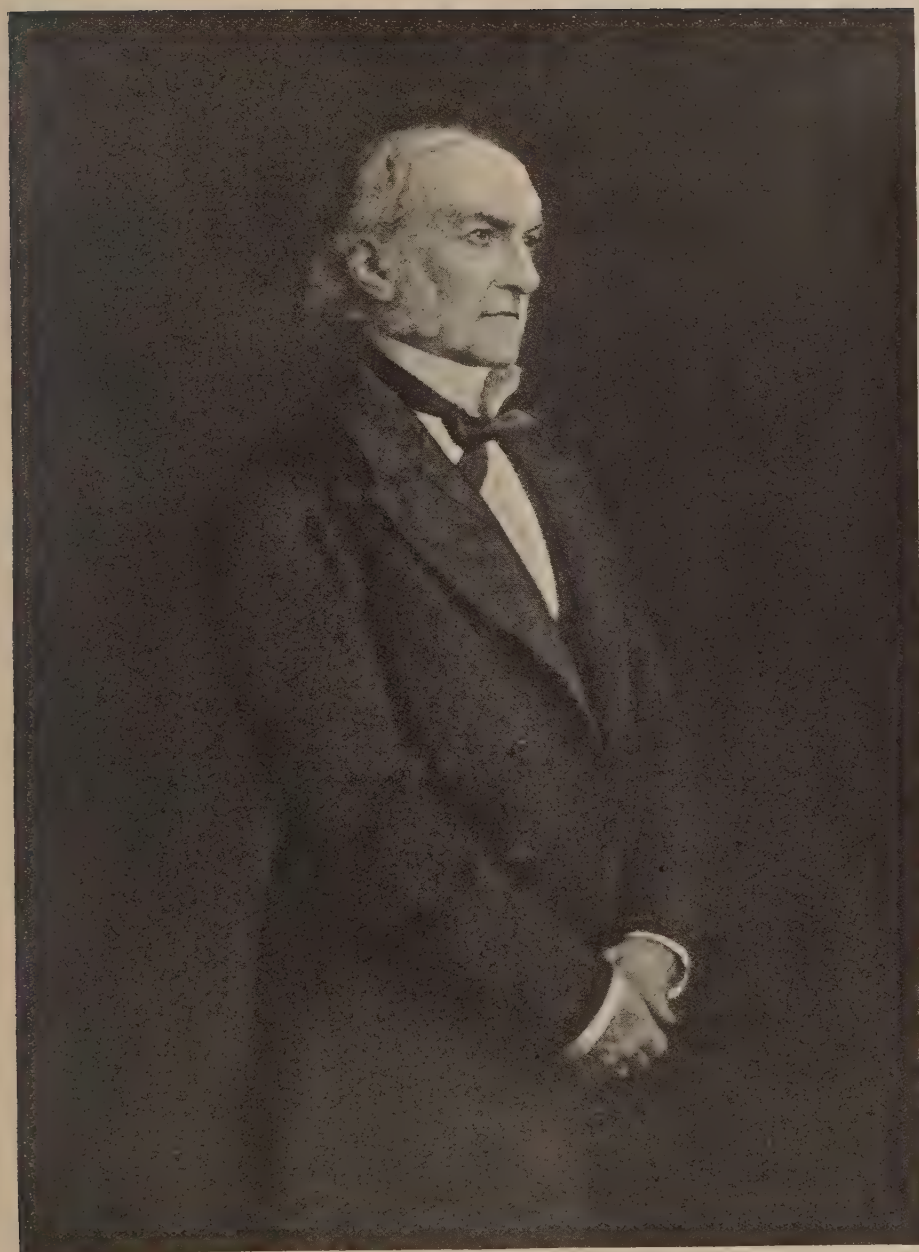
reinforcement of the opposition came from Mr. Chamberlain, who was organizing the machinery of the Liberal party on more popular but more effective lines, and was to some extent leading the party from behind.

Both Gladstone's appeal and Chamberlain's machinery proved their strength at the polls. Gladstone triumphed in Midlothian, and the Conservatives were overwhelmed throughout the country. "The romance of politics which befell my old age in Scotland," wrote Gladstone, "has spread over the whole land." The Liberals had a majority of 107 over the Conservatives, and of 42 over Conservatives and Home Rulers together. The queen was dismayed at this "great public misfortune." "Shocked and ashamed" at what had happened, she would at first "take no notice . . . of Mr. Gladstone." When, in April, she accepted Beaconsfield's resignation with undisguised reluctance, she sent for Hartington, who advised her that Gladstone was the only possible prime minister. Victoria the woman rebelled, but at length, though without grace, Victoria the queen yielded to the united persuasions of Hartington and Granville. In his seventy-first year Gladstone became, for a second time, prime minister.

Liberal Domestic Legislation

In individual ability the new ministry was rich. But Gladstone was always at his worst in framing a cabinet. He took in men whom he should have left out, and left out men whom he should have taken in. He had to be coerced into admitting Joseph Chamberlain, the exponent of the New Radicalism, to a seat in the cabinet. It has been well said that while three-fourths of the party was Radical and one-fourth Whig, three-fourths of the ministry was Whig and one-fourth Radical. Whig even differed from Whig, and Radical from Radical.

Until the closing years of its life the ministry could pay little heed to the needs of Great Britain, for its attention was monopolized by other parts of the empire. Domestic legislation, though useful, was broken and piecemeal. In 1880 means were found to make elementary education compulsory everywhere. An act imposing severe



WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE (1879)

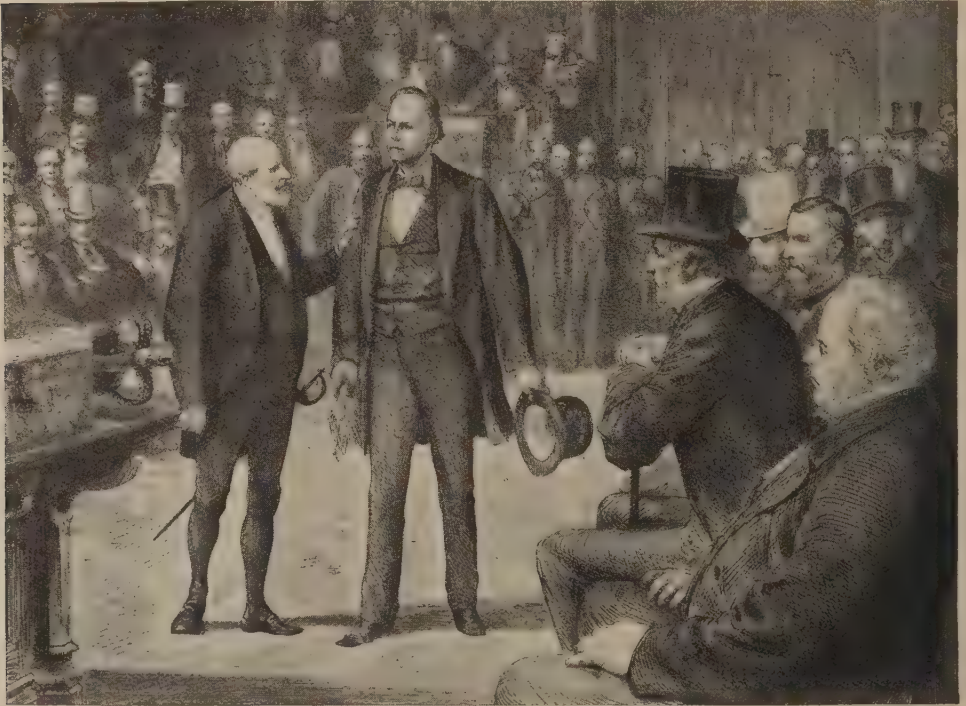
From the Painting by Sir John Everett Millais, P.R.A., in the National Gallery.

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penalties for bribery, and setting a legal limit to a candidate's election expenses (1883) did something to check corruption. A bill carried in 1880 gave workmen a better chance of compensation for injuries sustained during their employment, making masters liable not alone for their own negligence but

greater security of tenure, and the right, on the surrender of a tenancy, to compensation for permanent improvements.

Gladstone had already set farmers rejoicing by the abolition of the malt-tax for which he substituted a duty on beer, a change doubly fortunate because it tapped a rising



BRADLAUGH AND THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Captain Gosset, serjeant-at-arms, arresting Bradlaugh upon the Speaker's warrant.

From "*The Graphic*," July 3rd, 1880.

also for the negligence of those "to whose orders the workmen were bound to conform," and Chamberlain's Bankruptcy Bill (1883) afforded the public more effective protection against fraud and dishonesty. A significant social change is marked by an act of 1882 enabling a married woman to hold money or property, to retain full control of it, and to do as she wished with her own earnings. Farmers were pleased by a small amendment of the game laws (1881) which enabled them to protect their crops against hares and rabbits, and by a bill (1883) giving them

revenue and forestalled the transformation of beer from a brew of hops and malt to a masterpiece of skilful chemistry. But this was the ministry's only success in finance. An oscillating income-tax, coupled with rising expenditure, irritated the taxpayer and damaged the government. Fawcett, the blind postmaster-general, gained credit, however, for encouraging small investors to put money in the savings bank, for introducing sixpenny telegrams, for winning an easy revenue from a royalty on telephones, and for establishing the parcel post.

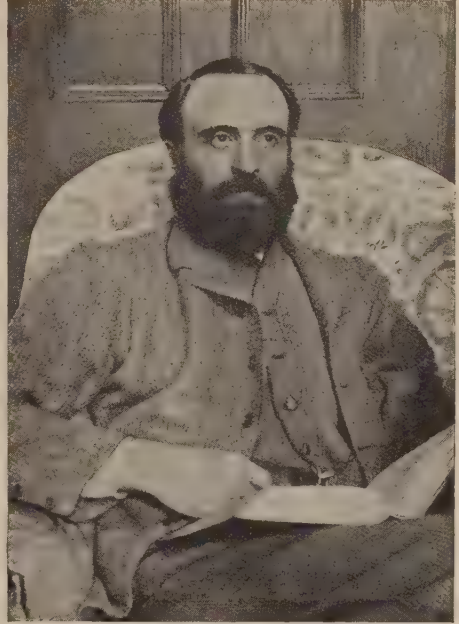
PARNELL AND HOME RULE

There were two main reasons for the slenderness of the ministry's domestic harvest. First, the work of the House of Commons had been disorganized by resolute obstruction which came from two opposite quarters of the house—from the young bloods of the Conservative party and from the Irish Home Rulers. Randolph Churchill and Drummond Wolff, Gorst and Balfour, known as the "Fourth Party," sometimes alarmed their leaders but more often they reduced the ministry to impotence. They blew up the coals of religious controversy when the atheist Bradlaugh, on appearing to take his seat for Northampton, refused to take the oath of allegiance which ended with the words "so help me God." By keeping this controversy alive the Fourth Party clogged the wheels of business and embroiled the Commons in a second Wilkes' case.

But the Home Rulers were the masters of the Fourth Party in the arts of obstruction, which their bolder spirits had developed during the previous parliament. Isaac Butt had been content with academic discussions of Home Rule. But there had now arisen a greater than he, Charles Stewart Parnell, who wanted concessions instead of compliments, and a parliament in Dublin instead of polite debates about it at Westminster. No man could have seemed less likely than Parnell to become the autocrat of the Home Rule party. He was a Protestant among Catholics, a landlord amongst men at war with landlords, a logician among emotionalists, a Conservative in grain allied with insurgents by instinct, a despot ruling over revolutionaries. Strangest of all in an Irish leader, he was not even an orator, though his terse, wiry, ruthless speeches commanded men's minds and convinced his followers that no plan availed save his. Though in strictness no organizer, he knew how to use the organizations of other men. He harnessed the surviving strength of Fenianism and used the machinery of the Land League, turning both to his purpose though he believed neither in Fenianism nor in the nationalization of land. And by these means he raised a tempest of agitation in Ireland.

At Westminster he brought into contempt the parliament which he despised. A skilful

political strategist, he learnt the forms of the House of Commons in order to destroy them. If Ireland could not have self-government, England should have no government at all. And while the forces of order were paralysed in Ireland, Parnell and his followers induced paralysis in the body politic of Britain. Irish grievances were many and genuine, and



CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

From a Photograph taken by Mrs. Parnell in the sitting-room at Womersley Lodge, Eltham.

Gladstone was not unwilling to remove them if he could. But neither he nor the majority of his followers were yet ready to concede an independent parliament to Ireland. Agitation and outrage were met by coercion, not without much heartburning on the Liberal side. An attempt in 1881 to amend the Land Act, by giving tenants increased security of tenure and a guarantee of fair rent, seemed to promise some check to the alternation of eviction and outrage, when all was ruined for a time by the crowning blunder of arresting Parnell himself.

If, amid the disorder of Ireland, any authority survived, that authority was Parnell's. When Parnell was dethroned, his

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successor was "Captain Moonlight." Parnell himself no less than the ministry was fearful of the consequences. He wanted the new Land Act to have a trial; he wanted to get relief for the indebted tenant which could come only from the public purse; and he feared that in his absence the extremists would get beyond the point at which he could

the Irish Nationalists were again able to exercise an effective influence in English politics.

The second reason for the barrenness of the ministry's domestic record was its preoccupation with external affairs. Gladstone had preached in Midlothian the "reversal" of Beaconsfield's policy. But "reversals" are neither congenial to the traditions of



MURDER OF LORD FREDERICK CAVENDISH AND MR. T. H. BURKE
Arrival of the bodies at the Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

From "The Graphic," May 13th, 1882.

recover control. Gladstone swung round to Parnell's view. Parnell was released from Kilmainham Gaol to curb the Fenian and the cattle-maimer, and the ministry were to help the Irish tenantry to pay their arrears of rent. But Parnell's absence had been fatal. After "Captain Moonlight" came the assassins. The brutal murder in Phoenix Park of Lord Frederick Cavendish, just appointed chief secretary, turned English opinion against the Irish party and led to fresh measures of coercion. In October, 1882, Parnell established a new organization called the National League, and slowly he recovered his authority. But it was not until 1885 that

British politics nor wholly practicable in the government of men. A stitch may perchance be undone, but the mark of the needle remains. It happened, therefore, that the demand of the Boers for independence was not granted at once or unequivocally; that the only service rendered to the peoples of the Balkans was to press for the observance of the Treaty of Berlin, and to secure Thessaly and part of Epirus for the Greeks; and that we had to fight our way to peace in Afghanistan. Gladstone's policy seemed at variance with his speeches. The queen had told him that he must "bear the consequences" of his words. And he had, in

DEATH OF GORDON

fact, to bear the double reproach of inconsistency and weakness.

Wars in South Africa and Afghanistan were not the only legacies of evil that he received from his predecessor. Beaconsfield's purchase of the Suez Canal shares had made it impossible for Britain to remain indifferent to the condition of Egypt. Badly governed and heavily indebted to French and British creditors Egypt had accepted in the interests of these creditors a joint control of its finances by French and British commissioners. In 1881 a revolt led by Arabi Pasha compelled the khedive to promise that he would impose a limit on foreign interference; but he was unable to restore order, and, after plans for joint intervention by the powers had failed, Britain intervened alone. British forces crushed the rebellion, and Britain found itself a trustee for the government of the country.

Ministers declared that they would retire as soon as possible. But Egypt was losing hold of the Sudan, which was falling under the control of a leader of Mohammedan fanatics called the Mahdi. After many hesitations and changes of policy it was decided to evacuate the Sudan, and General Gordon was sent to withdraw the garrisons. Instead of withdrawing, Gordon set himself the impossible task of re-establishing Egyptian authority without an army. He was hooped up by the Mahdi's troops in Khartoum. Gordon thereby succeeded in forcing the ministry to send an army to the Sudan if only to rescue him, but again there were hesitations and delays. The relief force arrived two days too late. Khartoum had fallen, and Gordon had been killed (January 24th, 1885). Gordon was treated as a martyr. If a public servant who loses his life in doing the exact opposite of what he is told to do is a martyr, then a martyr Gordon certainly was. The British people, seeing the sacrifice and ignoring its causes, canonized Gordon and heaped odium upon the ministry that had failed to save him. The grave of Gladstone's second ministry is at Khartoum.

Four months after the news of Gordon's death reached England, the ministry fell. It would probably have fallen at once, but for the fact that a dissolution was at the

moment virtually impossible. In 1884 the ministry had carried the Third Reform Act, which extended to the counties the household suffrage accorded in 1867 to the towns. But the ministry had only succeeded in carrying their bill after promising that it should



GENERAL GORDON

Statue by Hamo Thornycroft, R.A., in Trafalgar Square, London.

not be brought into force until the reform was completed by a redistribution of seats. The Redistribution Act of 1885 was the most effective attempt yet made to bring the representation into some reasonable accord with the distribution of population. But it was not until the bill became law in June that the opposition really desired to eject the ministry. Then the government was defeated on the budget and resigned.



KILMAINHAM GAOL, DUBLIN

From a Drawing by Herbert Railton, after a Photograph by W. Lawrence, Dublin.

CHAPTER XXI

THE IRISH QUESTION (1885-95)

HOME RULE, sometimes dominant and sometimes receding, is the persistent theme of the decade after the third Reform Act. Often it seemed as if the British people risked the loss of home rule for themselves so long as they denied it to Ireland. Already the campaign for Home Rule had almost destroyed the domestic programme of one ministry, and it was to disturb many more. The franchise had, indeed, been extended in 1884, and the balance of the representation improved in 1885, but Gladstone's ministry had fallen before it could begin the urgently needed reorganization of local government which it had planned. Parliamentary time had been

wasted in vain discussions, and during session after session the Commons had been reduced almost to impotence by skilful sabotage. Only by curtailing its own immemorial privileges had the House been able to do its essential business, and the credit of the parliamentary system had been rudely shaken.

Parnell organized his disciples in complete independence of British parties and in disregard of general British interests in order to use his following, now as an instrument of coercion and now as a means of driving political bargains. If parliament used coercion acts to trample upon Irishmen, Parnell trampled upon parliament, in its turn, by using his phalanx of Irishmen to

THE PREDOMINANT IRISH PARTY



MARQUESS OF SALISBURY

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

coerce it. His followers voted not according to the merits or demerits of a proposal but with regard solely to the probable effect of their votes upon the fortunes of the cause to which they were pledged. They voted upon one question while their minds were upon another. They helped to overthrow Gladstone by voting with the Conservatives on a question about which they cared little, and they were now prepared to sell their votes

to the highest bidder, whether Conservative or Liberal. That this policy was inspired by the highest patriotism and pursued in entire unselfishness did not abate the harm which it wrought to the inhabitants of Great Britain.

When Gladstone resigned in June, 1885, the queen sent for Salisbury. But Salisbury was most reluctant to form a ministry. Liberals still outnumbered Conservatives in the Commons by nearly a hundred, for

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Gladstone's resignation had only been forced by a chance division. Salisbury was not able to test his fortune at the polls before November, and in the meantime necessary financial business could only be carried if Gladstone and his men imposed upon themselves a self-denying ordinance. Moreover, bitter war was being waged within the Conservative ranks between "the Old Guard" and the "Fourth Party"; and no Conservative cabinet could command public confidence without ministers drawn from both the hostile sects. For a fortnight the country was without a government. But at last the internal dissensions of Conservatism were abated, Gladstone gave an undertaking to facilitate necessary business, and Salisbury formed a ministry. In doing so he attempted what he had formerly criticized in Disraeli. He accepted office in reliance not upon his own strength, but upon the powerlessness or goodwill of his opponents, without any assurance that when his position was challenged at the polls it would be affirmed by the electorate. He was condemned to weakness and Conservatism was tempted to compromises. His government has been called "a ministry of caretakers," and the tenure of the caretakers was short.

Rival Palliative Policies

On one point Liberals, Conservatives, and Home Rulers were agreed. In 1885 Parnell held the key of the strategic position. Irish problems must be studied afresh, and from a new angle of vision. Furthermore, strong elements in each of the rival parties were agreed that the problems could best be solved by the Conservatives. On the eve of his fall Gladstone had been in favour of a large extension of local government in Ireland, with a central board or council as the crown of the system; in a word, his policy was "devolution." But he had been unable to convince his cabinet. The Conservatives, influenced largely by Randolph Churchill and his friends, had decided to attempt the government of Ireland without coercion acts, and Carnarvon, then lord lieutenant of Ireland, in announcing the policy of the ministry, used words which seemed to hint at a measure of self-government on colonial

lines. Startled by these indications of a change in the Conservative mind, Gladstone was driven to re-canvass the whole question for himself. His private papers reveal him as moving towards the opinion that Home Rule of some kind might be the only escape from the difficulties of the Irish situation.*

Parnell's Support for Conservatives

Parnell certainly looked to the Conservatives. That he had some sort of understanding with them on the eve of Gladstone's fall is generally accepted, and is borne out by the speech and conduct of Conservatives both before and after they entered office. How far the understanding went a conflict of testimony makes it impossible to decide. Certain it is that Parnell, knowing nothing of the direction in which Gladstone's mind was moving, was assured that he had more to hope from Conservatives than from Liberals. The Conservative had so little confidence in their chances of success at the general election that they were ready to welcome Parnell's support. When the election came in November the Nationalist vote in England was accordingly cast for Conservative candidates. But the results were curious. In the towns the Liberals, weakened perhaps by the loss of the Irish vote, did badly; but they were more successful in the counties, where the agricultural labourer, grateful for the vote, employed it against the traditions of the countryside. As *Punch* depicted it, Hodge pulled ashore the drowning Gladstone. But the rescue was not complete. Neither Liberals nor Conservatives had an absolute majority; Conservatives and Nationalists just balanced the Liberals. Parnell had put his money on the wrong horse, for while the Irish vote might be of some use to the Liberals it could be of none to the Conservatives.

Gladstone had meanwhile decided that some measure of Home Rule was inevitable. He thought that it could most hopefully be attempted by the Conservatives. But the election had led the Conservatives out of temptation, and they now declined to honour

* See Morley's *Gladstone*, *passim*. The impression is cumulative, and therefore specific references might mislead.

GLADSTONE AND HOME RULE

their pact with Parnell, if pact it had been, or to be responsible for any measure of Home Rule. Gladstone thereupon openly avowed himself in favour of it. He secured the aid of the Nationalists and drove the Conservatives from office, but he split the Liberal party. Indeed, Liberalism was now divided into three sects—those who supported Gladstone; those, like Chamberlain, who favoured a generous measure of local government for Ireland; and those again who were opposed, like Hartington, both to the half-measure of local government and the bold experiment of Home Rule.

When Gladstone formed his cabinet in January, 1886, Chamberlain joined him, while Hartington stood aloof. Chamberlain was ready to keep an open mind until he saw what the Home Rule measure was like. He was prepared to discuss it. Hartington thought it altogether beyond the pale of argument, and at least four other prominent Liberals, including Bright, ranged themselves with Hartington by refusing to join the cabinet. For two months ministers debated their plan, and then Chamberlain resigned, declaring the bill to be tantamount to separation. Whether in after years, when he ruled at the colonial office, he would have expressed his objections as strongly may perhaps be doubted; for, though the bill gave to the new parliament of Ireland extensive powers and wide authority in domestic concerns, it imposed imperial control in a degree which the colonies would even then have resented. It did not impair the authority of the Crown. Foreign relations, the customs revenue and part of the excise, as well as military and naval affairs, remained under imperial administration and control. But the bill was clumsy. It was exceedingly vulnerable in some matters of principle and in many points of detail. It excluded Irish members altogether from Westminster, and yet left to the imperial parliament the control of much of the taxa-

tion of Ireland. Parnell attacked it on grounds of finance, but accepted it as a solution of the Irish problem. Member after member on the Liberal side denounced it as unworkable—as no measure of appeasement but an incitement to bitterness and strife.

The Home Rule Bill shook the Liberal party to its foundations. It took from Liberalism at a stroke the strength and steadiness of Whiggish Liberals like Hartington, the staunchness and virility of old



LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

From the Painting by Edwin A. Ward, in the Reform Club. By permission of Sir Henry Lucy, J.P.

Radicals like Bright, the force and energy of new Radicals like Chamberlain, whose programme of reforms had alone saved the party from defeat in the boroughs during the general election. But the Home Rule controversy was a social as well as a political event. It sundered friendships and families. It endangered old alliances, like that between Nonconformity and Liberalism; for the Nonconformists were themselves divided, some feeling that justice to Ireland required a measure of self-government, others seeing in Home Rule only a surrender to Rome. And this passionate controversy afforded cover to those who, fearing the growth of ideas in the Liberal party which might prove injurious to wealth and property, were already eager for a reasonable excuse to pass into alliance with Conservatism if not into its ranks.

In the House of Commons, the balance of

power was instantly destroyed. The Liberal Unionists, as dissentient Liberals were called, were almost a hundred strong, and when the bill reached its second reading it was rejected by a majority of thirty. Gladstone misread the signs of the times. He believed that though the House of Commons was against him the country was for him. Instead of



JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

From the Painting by Frank Holl, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

resigning he dissolved. But the mind of the electorate is hard to read. Gladstone erred in 1886 as Parnell and the Conservatives had erred in 1885. By a decisive majority the country confirmed the verdict of the Commons. In the new parliament those who were pledged against Home Rule outnumbered its supporters by well over a hundred, and Gladstone's resignation was inevitable. Salisbury's first idea was a coalition ministry of Liberal Unionists and Conservatives under the leadership of Hartington. But Hartington was still an unrepentant if very moderate Liberal, and was unwilling to surrender his freedom. Salisbury had to form a ministry from his own party, relying upon the unfettered support

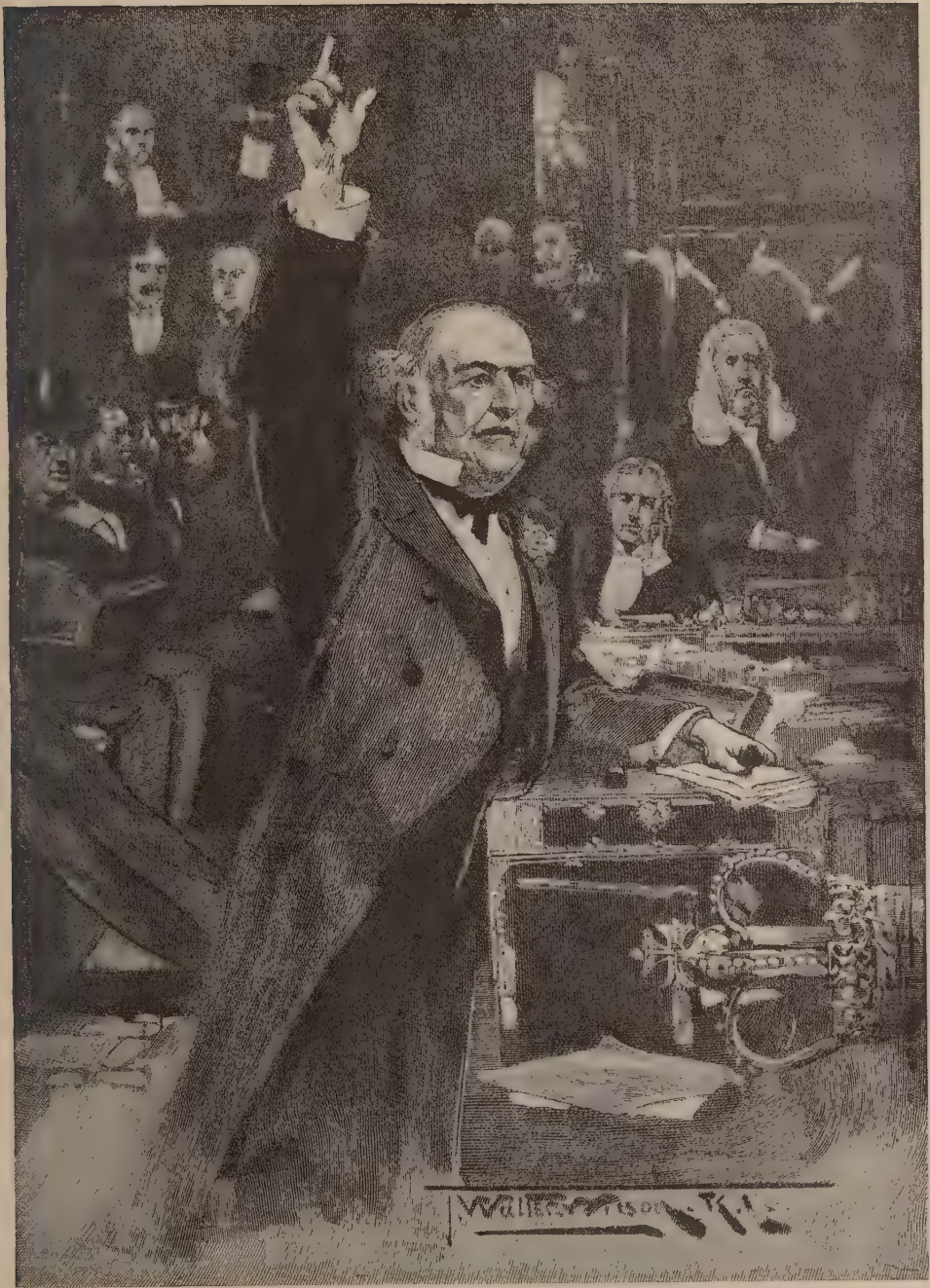
of Liberal Unionists. It was an indefinite alliance instead of a coalition.* But with one short interval that alliance, which passed in 1895 into a close coalition, ruled Britain for nearly twenty years.

"Resolute government" was now the Conservative prescription for the ills of Ireland. Excuse for repression was found in the "plan of campaign" whereby the tenants of Irish estates banded together to assess their own rents. When landlords or their agents refused the compositions offered the rents were paid into a fund to maintain the rent-war, and to succour evicted tenants. Parnell, who disapproved of the plan, could not wholly crush it. Unyielding landlords therefore got no rent and obstinate tenants were evicted. Both must at times have been equally miserable, for if some tenants lost their homes, some landlords lost their income. Balfour, who became chief secretary in 1887, opposed disorder by a Crimes Bill which turned the familiar but still exceptional devices of repression into a permanent part of the machinery of Irish law. On the other hand he attacked the social and economic evils which provoked disorder and agrarian crime. Some grievances of Irish leaseholders were removed in 1887, and in 1891 a purchase bill enabled tenants to buy their holdings by means of loans granted by the State on easy terms.† Balfour's policy developed into the old plan of alternating kicks and kindness. Irishmen resented the kicks without showing much gratitude for the kindness. But Balfour's great administrative ability enabled him to apply a suspected policy with exceptional skill, and to diminish the virulence of Irish ill-feeling.

He was helped by the misfortunes of the Nationalists. In 1887 *The Times* sought to demonstrate the need for coercion in a series of articles on *Parnellism and Crime*. To fasten responsibility for outrage upon the Nationalist leader it published the facsimile of a letter, apparently written by Parnell, which partially excused or condoned the Phoenix Park murders of 1882. Parnell declared

* *Life of Devonshire*, ii, 169-174. The offer was renewed on Randolph Churchill's resignation at the end of 1886, *ib.* 178-181.

† A smaller measure of land purchase was passed in 1888.



GLADSTONE INTRODUCING HIS FIRST HOME RULE BILL, 1886

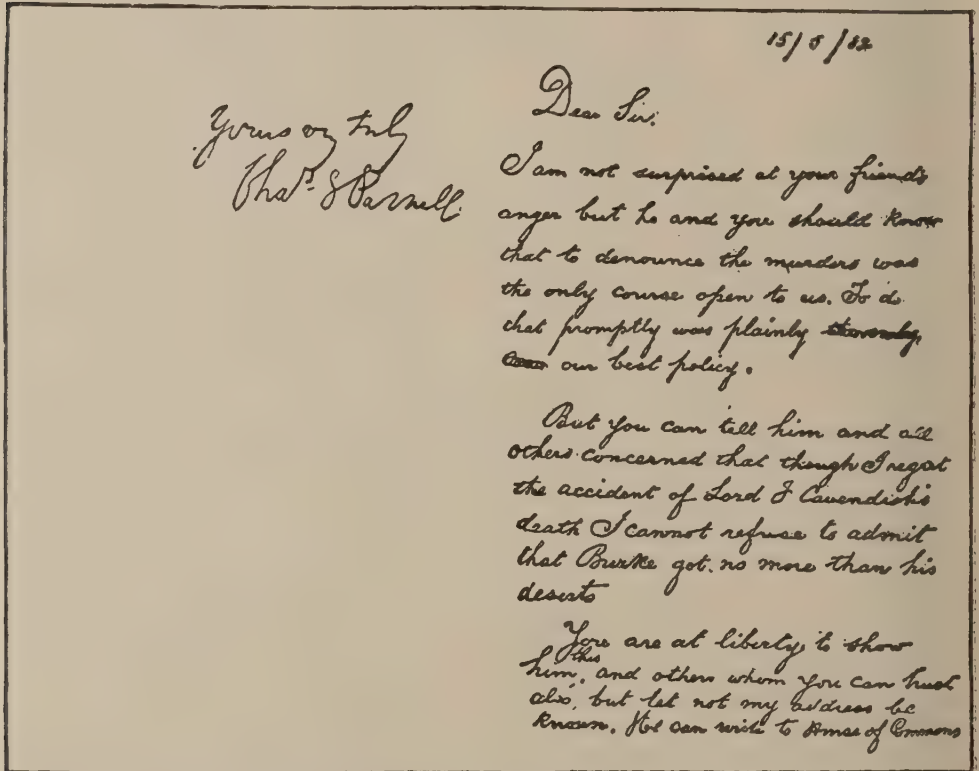
The Bill was defeated on its Second Reading by a majority of 30, composed of 250 Conservatives and 93 Liberals.

From a contemporary Drawing by J. Walter Wilson, R.I.

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that the letter was a forgery, but the public, mesmerized by the handwriting, believed it to be genuine. It helped the Crimes Bill through parliament, and it discredited the Nationalists. But ultimately this disaster turned to their profit. In 1889 this and other letters were proved to be the clumsy

troyed his public credit. Nationalists were divided. Some clung to Parnell, others set the party interests before personal loyalty. Gladstone felt driven to dissociate himself from the fallen leader. But Parnell's stormy course was almost run. He died, in October, 1891, while still in the prime of life, battling



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE LETTER PUBLISHED IN THE TIMES ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY MR. PARNELL

forgeries of a broken-down rogue called Pigott, who confessed his crime, fled the country, and committed suicide to escape arrest. The chivalrous revulsion of feeling which followed the discovery that Parnell had been attacked and discredited on such flimsy evidence turned the current of public opinion in favour of the Nationalists.

Then came a second disaster more overwhelming than the first. Parnell was cited in 1890 as co-respondent in an undefended petition for divorce. His private fault des-

almost at the last to recover his lost ascendancy over his own people.

To the English Home Rulers the Nationalist schism and the destruction of Parnell's influence were damaging blows. Their hopes of a Liberal recovery at the polls were to some extent dashed. When the general election came in 1892 Gladstone none the less expected a Liberal triumph. In fact the electors were undecided, and perhaps rather indifferent. For Conservatism had not proved wholly barren in domestic legislation.

THE SECOND HOME RULE BILL

and moved, perhaps, as fast as the mass of English electors wished to go. The polling reflected these mental waverings. Liberals did rather better, Conservatives and Liberal Unionists rather worse than in 1886. The Nationalist strength, though divided, was little changed. On the balance there was a precarious majority of forty for Home Rule, and no sure majority for anything else. In 1893 Gladstone introduced a new Home Rule Bill, in most essentials very much like the bill of 1886. But there was one marked difference between the two measures. In 1886 Irish members were to vanish from Westminster. In 1893 they were to be retained, though reduced in numbers, for the consideration of Irish business, and this "in and out" arrangement was subsequently amended so as to place the Irish representatives on the same footing as other members. The bill passed the Commons by thirty-four votes, only to be rejected in the Lords by a majority of three hundred and seventy-eight. Irish self-government in any form passed outside the range of practical politics for a dozen years, and in its complete form became impossible for almost a generation.

The County Councils Act

For ten years Irish affairs had occupied the centre of the stage, and the needs of the rest of the United Kingdom had fallen into the background. But Irish interests were not the main concern of electors on this side of the Irish Channel. Probably, indeed, the inhabitants of Great Britain were, as a whole, bored by Irish affairs, which they neither understood nor cared to understand. Their thoughts were not set primarily upon Home Rule, but upon questions farther off or nearer home, upon imperial interests and domestic problems. Yet they had perforce to see the fortunes and alliances of British parties swayed or determined on Irish questions unless they were prepared to concede to the full the Nationalist demands. Neglect of English, Welsh and Scottish affairs was the price exacted for the denial of Home Rule to Ireland.

Nevertheless these years were not wholly barren, even if they seemed at the time unfruitful. Partly by legislation and partly

by civic enterprise and energy a revolution was effected in local government. In 1888 the County Councils Act transferred the government of counties from the justices of the peace in quarter session to elected bodies, modelled on the city and borough councils established by the act of 1835. The arrangement in counties differed from that in the towns mainly in giving control of the police to a joint committee of the council and of the justices, and in providing, subject to report, for a more extensive delegation of business to committees. The first difference was a concession to tradition; the second, which had the warrant of experience, was to prevent the administrative delays otherwise inevitable where the members of the governing body were scattered over a wide area. About a century earlier statutory authority had been obtained for an analogous system, worked out and successfully applied by the justices of Lancashire. Other counties had, after their own fashion, reached a like end by similar means. The best counties therefore did little more than exchange a court of nominees, dominated by the squirearchy, for a council chosen by popular election. But the act brought the backward counties nearer to the level of those administratively more advanced; it provided machinery for new developments; and it marked a stage in the process whereby the villagers, enfranchised by the household suffrage of 1884, were made partners in their own government.

Administrative County of London

While the government of rural areas was reorganized the great towns and cities were given the powers of counties. As in 1835 the ancient corporation of the City of London eluded the hand of the reformer. But an immense boon was conferred upon greater London, which had spread far beyond the City bounds, absorbing towns and villages as it spread, and submerging local patriotisms, without any adequate organization or centre of civic interest and activity being provided for its people. Greater London now became an administrative county and was given a chance of civic development equal to, if in some ways different from, the opportunities of the great cities and towns of the midlands

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and the north. The London County Council, which absorbed the old Metropolitan Board of Works, became at once the most powerful and important organ of local government in the country, and attracted to its service men of ability and distinction.

The County Councils Act owed something

the jungle of conflicting authorities was reduced to a measure of order by the establishment of urban district or rural district councils which acquired many of the most important functions of a multitude of specialized authorities. It was a gallant though not wholly successful attempt to secure a simple



AREA UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL, 1888

The portion of the Crystal Palace shown was afterwards incorporated in Penge.

to the preparatory work of the previous cabinet, but when the Liberals tried to complete the reorganization of local government by a further measure in 1894 they were not so happily inspired. In the District and Parish Councils Act they sought, first to revive the parish as a unit of administration, and secondly to simplify the "chaos of areas" and confusion of authorities by interposing in each district a single authority for a variety of purposes between the parish and the county. The parish councils have not yet achieved the first of these objects. But

and intelligible system of local government with the parish at the base, the county or county borough at the top, and the municipal borough or the urban district or the rural district as the intermediate order in the hierarchy of local administration.

Social and economic problems were absorbing an increasing share of the attention which, in other periods, had been given to political controversies. The new system of local government afforded a means whereby the solution of some of these problems might be attempted. The weakness of Liberalism



STATE VISIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION (AUGUST 22, 1888)

Sir Archibald Campbell, Bart. (Lord Blythwood), reading the address to Her Majesty.

From the Painting by Sir John Lavery, R.A., in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM

in these years may doubtless be attributed in part to the burden of Home Rule, but it was due also to a failure to appreciate the shifting emphasis of public interest. When the nation asked for social reform Liberals replied with the unsatisfying formulas of the Newcastle programme, which was at once too negative and too political. On the other

of town-dwellers. In 1885 an act was passed to provide "suitable dwellings for the working-classes." It was not a great success, but in 1890 a great Housing Act consolidated the law and extended its scope. Local authorities were enabled to clear away old slums and take precautions against the creation of new ones, to substitute new dwellings for old in



JOHN BURNS ADDRESSING A MEETING OF DOCKERS ON TOWER HILL DURING THE GREAT STRIKE OF 1892

From a contemporary Drawing by H. H. Fèvre.

hand Chamberlain grafted upon Conservatism some of the ideas of that new Radicalism of which he had been the prophet. A liberal social and domestic policy was the price which Conservatives had to pay for the Unionist alliance, and it was paid all the more willingly because the party felt that it was at the same time strengthening its claims to working-class support and reverting in some degree to the methods of fraternal government in which it had never wholly abandoned its belief.

Housing, sanitation, and the care of public health were of vital importance to a nation

areas where the property had decayed or become insanitary, or to erect workmen's dwellings on the outskirts of the towns. By the Small Holdings Act of 1892 county councils were empowered to lend money to the purchasers of small holdings, and to borrow from the public works loan commissioners the money which they proposed to lend. The act would have been excellent if the county councils could have persuaded the owners of suitable land to sell; but they had no power of compulsion in this direction, and they were not very successful in persuasion.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

These were not the only useful bills of the Salisbury ministry. The Factory Acts were improved, and the liability of employers for accidents to their workmen was extended. A bill for the prevention of cruelty to children (1889) was the work of a private member, but it was a minister who helped to make it law. A small Public Health Act for London (1891) did something to keep its streets clean. Ministers made elementary education free (1891); they did something to encourage technical instruction; and they gave a little aid to the Scottish universities. Scotland owed a Local Government Act (1894) to the Liberals, but the Local Government Act for Ireland (1892) stands to the credit of a Conservative minister.

Local government may be less exciting than high politics, but in the modern organization of society it has much to do with health and welfare. And men were in the mind to develop it. The great municipalities discovered new means of augmenting their usefulness by increasing the public supply of public necessities and services, of pure water, of trams, of gas, even in some cases of electric light. They found new means of borrowing cheaply for municipal needs.

Development of Socialism

This local activity marked also the development in a new direction of the tendency to collectivism through the extension of the sphere of government, whether by the State or by subordinate authorities, which was characteristic of the later years of the nineteenth century. To the mid-Victorians "advanced thought" had meant individualism; the "advanced thought" of the later Victorians was socialistic. As a theory Socialism was in the main the plaything of the intellectuals, and the organized workmen were at first suspicious of it: perhaps because they distrusted its middle-class prophets. But by the 'nineties the citizens of the towns were overcoming their early dislike of Socialism. William Morris preached it; the Social Democratic Federation organized it; and the Fabians began to apply it through the existing machinery of the State, more particularly in the sphere of local government.

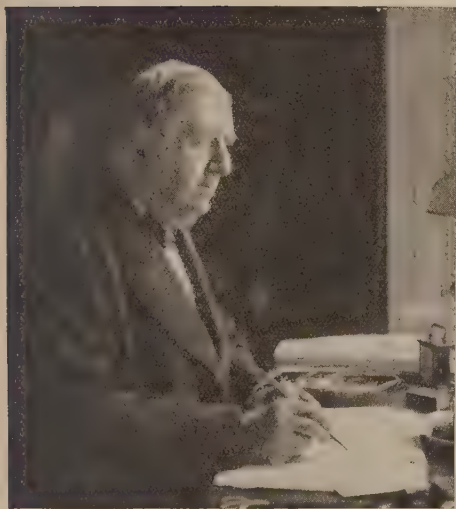
Labour was still weak as a parliamentary force. In 1886 there were nine Labour members in the Commons, but they acted in alliance with the Liberals. In 1892 four men were elected who were not prepared to merge Labour in Liberalism, but acted with the same independence as the Nationalists had shown under the guidance of Parnell. At the next election they met with reverses. But the Independent Labour Party was a portent—of good or of ill according as the reader may view it. Trade unionism had meanwhile extended its scope, and at the same time altered its balance and to some extent its character. Hitherto it had been mainly an organization of skilled craftsmen. Now it gathered in the unskilled workers, and showed that it was not impossible to organize them for mutual support.

Depressed Industrialism

The "new unionism" proved itself effectually in the great strike of the London dockers for the "docker's tanner," or a payment of sixpence an hour, which succeeded not merely through organization, but because trade unionism generally came to its aid, and because public sympathy and support were enlisted on the dockers' behalf. Labour leaders were divided as to the relative merits of political and industrial action. Some preferred to rely on their industrial weapons; others believed in organizing the wage-earners so as to secure direct representation in local government and in parliament.

Strikes were frequent in these years. They were years of recurrent depression and uneasiness in industry, in agriculture, and in commerce. Industry had to face the competition of a united Germany, busily organizing its industrial resources, and eager for a great place in the markets of the world. Industry perhaps gained as much from the stimulus of rivalry as it lost by competition. But agriculture had to meet successive blows. After cheap grain from the American west came cheap grain from the newly developed prairie belt of Canada. Improvements in transport and refrigeration brought cheap meat to challenge the farmer in yet another market. And there was general alarm about the maintenance of British

TWO NOTABLE CHANCELLORS



SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT

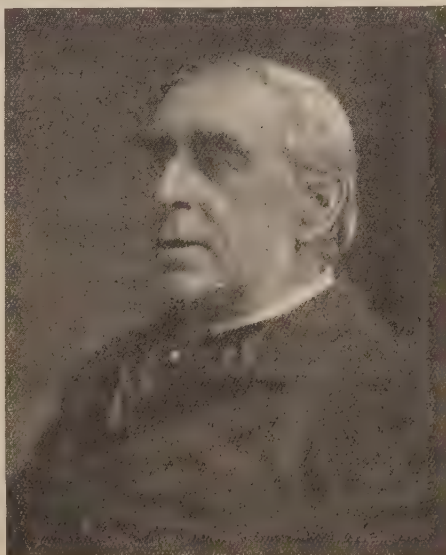
From a Photograph by Reginald Haines.

supremacy in commerce as well as in industry. Economic uneasiness was increased by the rising value of gold and the consequent fall in prices, which discouraged the industrialists. Deflation is a lesser evil than inflation, but it, also, has its dangers as well as its advantages.

Looking back it can be seen that the fears of the captains of industry and commerce were exaggerated, though it was well for them to realize that their position could not be maintained without effort. It seems impossible to prove that there was consistent bad trade for any long time during these years. The national revenue was healthy. Expenditure rose, sometimes through extravagance or through increasing expenditure on armaments, but also through the extension of the sphere of government. And the demands made upon the nation were not greater than it could bear. Goschen and Harcourt both have substantial achievements to their credit as chancellors of the exchequer. Goschen took advantage of the low rate of interest to effect a considerable saving in annual charges by converting a large part of the national debt into "consols" bearing $2\frac{3}{4}$ (ultimately $2\frac{1}{2}$) per cent. interest instead of 3 per cent. Harcourt, in 1894, altered and increased the death duties, a

small but useful alteration in the incidence of taxation which has lent itself to fruitful development. Both Harcourt and Goschen were attacked as plunderers and accused of spoliation, but they rendered valuable service to the nation at large.

Before Harcourt's famous budget a great change had occurred in the political scene. The mighty figure of Gladstone had passed from the stage. Gladstone was 84, and his eyesight and hearing were failing; he resigned in 1894. The queen chose Lord Rosebery as his successor, and thereby imposed upon a party which she disliked a leader in whom sections of the party had no trust. She had, in effect, dealt a mortal blow to a feeble ministry. For fifteen months it struggled on amid growing unpopularity, hated by some because of the death duties, by others because of its attempted temperance legislation, by others again for its proposal to disestablish the Church in Wales. Then in 1895 it was defeated on the army estimates, and Rosebery resigned. Salisbury formed his third ministry, and appealed to the electors for their support. He received an overwhelming vote of confidence and remained in power for the rest of his political life.



GEORGE JOACHIM GOSCHEN

From a Photograph by Russell and Sons.



MONTREAL FROM MOUNT ROYAL, 1898

From a Photograph by Notman & Son, Montreal.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DOMINION OF CANADA AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA (1855-1901)

BY the middle of the nineteenth century the principles of British colonial policy were firmly established. These principles may be summed up as trust on the one side and responsibility on the other. In Canada and in South Africa, in Australia and New Zealand, the colonists had assumed the management of their own affairs. Representative government was the rule. Colonial constitutions, if they had not been framed by the colonists themselves, had been shaped in accordance with their wishes. It was already a settled article of policy that as each colony grew to maturity its ministers should become directly answerable to the elected representatives of the people. Responsibility came to be regarded as the logical outcome of representative government, for as the ministers of each colony

were brought under the control of its assembly the colonists themselves became in turn responsible for the management, for good or evil, of their own affairs.

During the next forty years these principles were steadily applied, on the whole with conspicuous success. But until the middle 'seventies there were still prominent British statesmen of both political parties who thought that they involved great risks. So slender seemed the ties which bound the self-governing colonies to Great Britain that these gloomy prophets could foresee no other outcome of British policy than separation and independence. Foreign statesmen, who were able to think only in the traditional terms of empire, could see in the attitude of Britain to her colonies nothing but a confession of weakness. Yet an interesting

FEDERAL ORGANIZATION OF COLONIES

thing happened. Out of diversity, which in many directions increased rather than diminished, there grew a new kind of unity to confound British pessimists. From the new unity sprang a strength which both puzzled and astonished continental statesmen. Each colony or group of colonies developed an independent character and a national sense

economic development of the colonies, upon constitutional progress within the colonies themselves, or upon the movement of groups of colonies towards some form of federal organization. To some extent these interests were intertwined. Economic needs necessitated constitutional changes and constitutional developments were helped by



DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA SHOWING THE DATES OF ENTRY OF THE VARIOUS PROVINCES INTO THE CONFEDERATION

in some degree peculiar to itself. But while it was thus enabled to make its own special contribution to the growth of the British people, it clung tenaciously to the older traditions of the race, and colonial patriotism was merged in a larger loyalty.

For forty years after Waterloo the main interest in colonial affairs had centred upon the struggle of the colonists for self-government, and upon the gradual recognition by statesmen at home of colonial claims to representative institutions or responsible ministries. The interest of the next forty years or more centred upon the growth and

economic progress. Railways, for instance, were needed for the exploitation of colonial resources; inter-colonial railways required common action; and in their turn the railways helped to bind colony to colony. Fiscal problems arose which individual colonies could not solve in isolation. When colonies joined together to solve them, fiscal unity helped to bind them more closely in constitutional groups. Meantime the colonies grew in population; they gradually found means to develop their resources; and in spite of occasional set-backs, they increased in wealth and prosperity.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

As in the preceding period, the first and most significant constitutional development occurred in Canada; and just as the work of Durham and Elgin had set the precedent for responsible government, so Canadian statesmen set the precedent for colonial federation. Within less than a generation after the union of Ontario and Quebec the Canadian problem had widened from provincial to continental dimensions. In 1846 the Oregon Treaty determined the boundaries of the United States and of British territory westward from Ontario to the Pacific. Over the wide area north of this boundary the traders of the Hudson Bay Company were at first the masters, though they had not sovereign authority. They were hostile to settlements which might disturb their business. A group of settlers had, nevertheless, been established early in the century on the Red River (now in Manitoba), and Vancouver Island, after the Oregon Treaty had assigned it to Britain, had been slowly settled by British colonists, who secured representative government. With the discovery of gold on the mainland in 1856 the miners who flocked to the workings on the Fraser River formed the nucleus of a new settlement. At first it was governed as a Crown colony (1858), but in 1866 it was united with Vancouver Island. The united colony, taking the name of British Columbia, which had first been given to the mainland settlements, was accorded the full rights of a self-governing colony.

Racial Balance in Canada

Canadian statesmen had to look forward to the time when the settlement of Manitoba and the growth of British Columbia would create a continental Canada. Placed as it was alongside the northern border of the United States, it would require a powerful central authority to care for its defence as well as to direct and control its development. But a more immediate and pressing difficulty threatened the peace of Ontario and Quebec. Between 1840 and 1860 the population of Canada as a whole almost doubled. Emigrants from Great Britain and America were flocking into Canada in great numbers. Most of these colonists settled in Ontario,

and were gradually pressing westward. The result was that the balance of races in the union was upset and the British in Ontario claimed a part in Canadian government larger than the equal share allotted to them by the settlement of 1840. The old racial conflict threatened to break out in a new form, and Canadian statesmen could see no escape from it save by means of a federal system such as Durham had reluctantly dismissed in 1838 as an impossible ideal.

Confederation of Canada

Durham's foresight was doubly justified, for not only did federal government prove to be the solution of the Canadian problem, but responsible government had nurtured a race of Canadian statesmen who were equal to the task of creating a federal Canada. The maritime provinces were already considering a federal system for themselves when the leaders of the two great parties in the union parliament, John Macdonald and George Brown, determined to sink their differences in order to secure an agreed solution of the great problem of Canadian government. They entered into a conference, and to this conference they invited the representatives of the maritime provinces, who suspended their own negotiations in order to effect a wider federation. In the autumn of 1864 the representatives of the five provinces met at Quebec. With remarkable speed they devised a constitution which combined provincial autonomy with a strong federal power. Nearly two years were spent on the negotiation of details, and delay was caused by the shifting fortunes of British ministries, but in 1867 the British parliament readily confirmed the work of Canadian statesmen by the British North America Act, by which Quebec and Ontario again became separate provinces, and together with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick formed the Canadian Federation.

This achievement has a threefold interest. In the first place, it was entirely the work of Canadian statesmen. British ministers and the imperial parliament did little more than give legal force to an accomplished fact. In one respect alone did they run counter to Canadian wishes. It had been proposed to

CANADA'S GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

call the new state the Kingdom of Canada. For reasons which now appear singularly feeble, ministers at home objected to the title and chose instead that of the Dominion of Canada. In the second place, Canadians had been impressed, during the American civil war, by the weakness of the central government of the United States as against the strength of the states of which the union was composed. That weakness sprang, of course, from the unavoidable difficulties which beset the formation of the American union, but Canadians were determined to avoid it. They proceeded, therefore, on a different plan in dividing the powers of government between the provinces and the federal authority. Whereas in the United States the powers of the federation had been defined and the residue of powers left to the component states, in Canada the powers of the provinces were enumerated, and all powers not definitely assigned to provinces were vested in a strong federal authority. The central government of Canada is, therefore, relatively more powerful than the central government of the United States. In the third place, the federal constitution of Canada is profoundly interesting as the first of three widely different experiments in federal government which have been made within the borders of the British commonwealth. And for this reason the historian of the future is likely to regard it as a greater achievement than the constitutional change by which, in the same year, statesmen at home enfranchised the artisans of Britain.

Newfoundland and Confederation

But confederation was not fully accomplished by the act of 1867. Prince Edward Island at first stood aloof and did not enter the federation until 1873. British Columbia joined it in 1871, making terms for herself which were to have an important bearing upon the future of Canada. The federal parliament had already begun to deal with the problem of the unsettled lands between Ontario and British Columbia. In 1869 it had bought out the territorial interests of the Hudson Bay Company, which lost its political importance whilst retaining its trading rights, and this had cleared the way

for the creation of the new province of Manitoba in 1870. In one respect alone did the federal movement fail. Newfoundland, content with the responsible government accorded to it in 1855, declined to be drawn into the confederation, and still remains apart from continental Canada, though it controls the fishing settlements along the mainland coast of Labrador.

Canada's Transcontinental Railway

Communications are of supreme importance in a new country, and railways have been a vital factor in the economic and political development of Canada. The maritime provinces, like British Columbia, had stipulated for the construction of inter-colonial railways when they joined the confederation. Financial and political difficulties delayed the work, but in 1876 a line joining the maritime provinces to Ontario was at last completed. British Columbia had been promised that within ten years after she entered the confederation a railway should join east and west. She was kept waiting until British Columbians began to talk of secession, and in 1876 it required all the skill and tact of Lord Dufferin to appease their resentment. But after 1881 the great enterprise was pushed forward with vigour, and in 1887 the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the coast of British Columbia. The railway was of threefold importance. It opened up the grain-lands of Manitoba, and later made possible the growth of Alberta and Saskatchewan; it knitted together the sundered elements of the confederation; and by the mere fact that it was a purely Canadian line running east and west—a system independent of the railways of the United States—it settled the future of Canada as a continental power free from American entanglements.

The economic fortunes of Canada are thus closely interwoven with its political development. Though it was not until 1905 that Alberta and Saskatchewan were strong enough to be admitted to the confederation with full provincial rights, their future was already marked out. By 1895 the population of Canada had risen to five millions. A quarter of a century later it had passed

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

eight millions. Canada had, in fact, grown to the stature of a nation. Its development owed much to its own statesmen, trained in the practice of responsible government, and not a little to some of its governors-general.

Dufferin (1872-78) rendered services in the consolidation of federal Canada similar to

"more proud of her claim to share in the heritage of England's past, more ready to accept whatever obligations" might be imposed upon her "by her partnership in the future fortunes of the Empire."* This speech fell, we are told, "like a revelation upon the ears of the British people," and helped to create a new confidence in the



THE FIRST DOMINION PARLIAMENT HOUSE, OTTAWA

These buildings were destroyed by fire in 1916.

Photo by Topley, Ottawa.

those of Elgin in acclimatizing responsible government. But not the least of his services to Canada and to Britain was that he made people at home realize the resources of the Dominion and dispelled the erroneous notion that Britain's generous colonial policy had weakened her hold upon its loyalty. "So far," he said, in 1874, "from this gift of autonomy having brought about any divergence of aim or aspiration on either side . . . the sentiments of Canada towards Great Britain" were "infinitely more friendly" than in the days of "an excessive and untoward tutelage." Never was Canada

partnership between the British people at home and those across the seas.

In some respects political and economic development has proceeded more slowly in Australia than in Canada. Yet the growth of Australia has been amazing. In 1855, when responsible government was granted to its older colonies, the population of the country was about a million. By an active immigration policy it was trebled in thirty-five years. During the next two decades it grew more slowly, but in 1921 Australia and Tasmania contained five and a half million

* Lyall, *Life of Dufferin*, ch. 7.

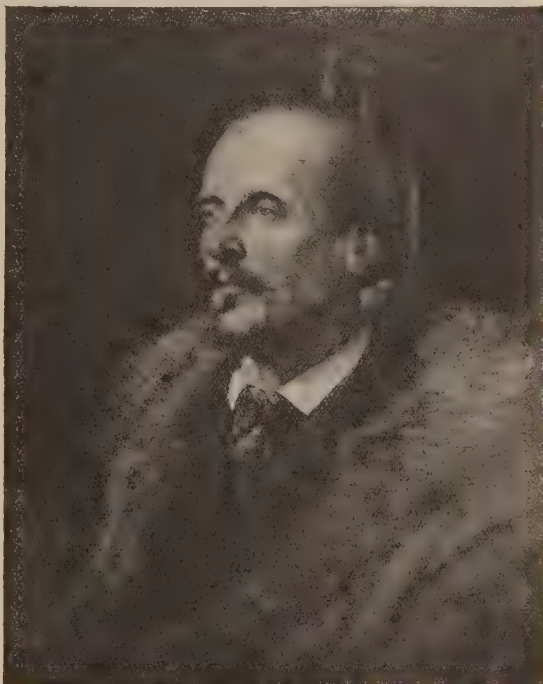
FEDERAL DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA

people. New Zealand advanced less rapidly. Throughout the 'sixties its progress was retarded by unhappy conflicts with the Maoris in North Island, and it was not until 1870 that the Maori wars came to an end. At the close of the nineteenth century the population of New Zealand was about three-quarters of a million, but since then it has increased rapidly, and in 1921 it had passed a million and a quarter. Australasia is therefore occupied by nearly seven million people. Since its settlers have been recruited almost wholly from people of British stock, the growth of Australasia is not less significant of the expansion of the British people than the contemporary increase in the population of Canada.

A new British nation was, then, slowly forming itself in the southern seas during the second half of the nineteenth century. But Australasia's awakening to a realization of what was happening came tardily. Colonial feeling was strong and inter-colonial comradeship was feeble. Colonial patriotism, indeed, long remained the enemy of Australian unity. New South Wales felt, and made the other colonies feel, all the patronizing superiority of the eldest born. She was wedded to free trade, while the other colonies, and especially her jealous rival Victoria, were protectionist. Each colony had its own means of easy and independent access to the sea. Each, in independence, could hope to reach a development which would be happy and prosperous, even though it might fall short of a possible best, unattainable without mutual aid. For more than a generation after their "coming of age" the colonies pursued independent ways, squandering precious capital upon unrelated railways planned on different systems, and wasting their strength upon a warfare of conflicting tariffs.

Yet Australia could no more than Canada expect to reach its fullest development if the colonies remained in isolation. Like

Canada, it required inter-colonial railways. And the old idea that Australia consisted of a thin shell of habitable land surrounding a core of desert was fast being broken down by the progress of exploration and by the increase of scientific knowledge of the country's peculiarities and possibilities. Slowly it dawned upon men of foresight



MARQUESS OF DUFFERIN

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

that if the resources of Australia were fully to be explored and utilized common action would ultimately be needed. But in the absence of some more compelling need it might have been long before these motives could have forced Australia into a federal mould.

Australians were impelled towards federation by the development in the southern seas of an international problem which fortunately, though perhaps mistakenly, they believed to endanger their safety. In the 'eighties the great powers began to bid actively against each other for sovereignty

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

over the islands of the Pacific. France had begun to establish her influence there while the Australian colonies were still in their infancy. Britain and the United States had both striven, though in vain, to avoid new responsibilities. In the 'eighties the German government, following in the wake of German traders, had begun to join in the competition.

Guinea and the New Hebrides, but ministers at home remained stolidly indifferent to Australian opinion, and when Queensland seized eastern New Guinea in 1883 the colonial office, to the indignation of the Australians, disavowed her action. As if to complete Australia's exasperation, Britain agreed in 1886 to divide eastern New Guinea



MAP SHOWING POSSESSIONS OF EUROPEAN POWERS IN THE PACIFIC

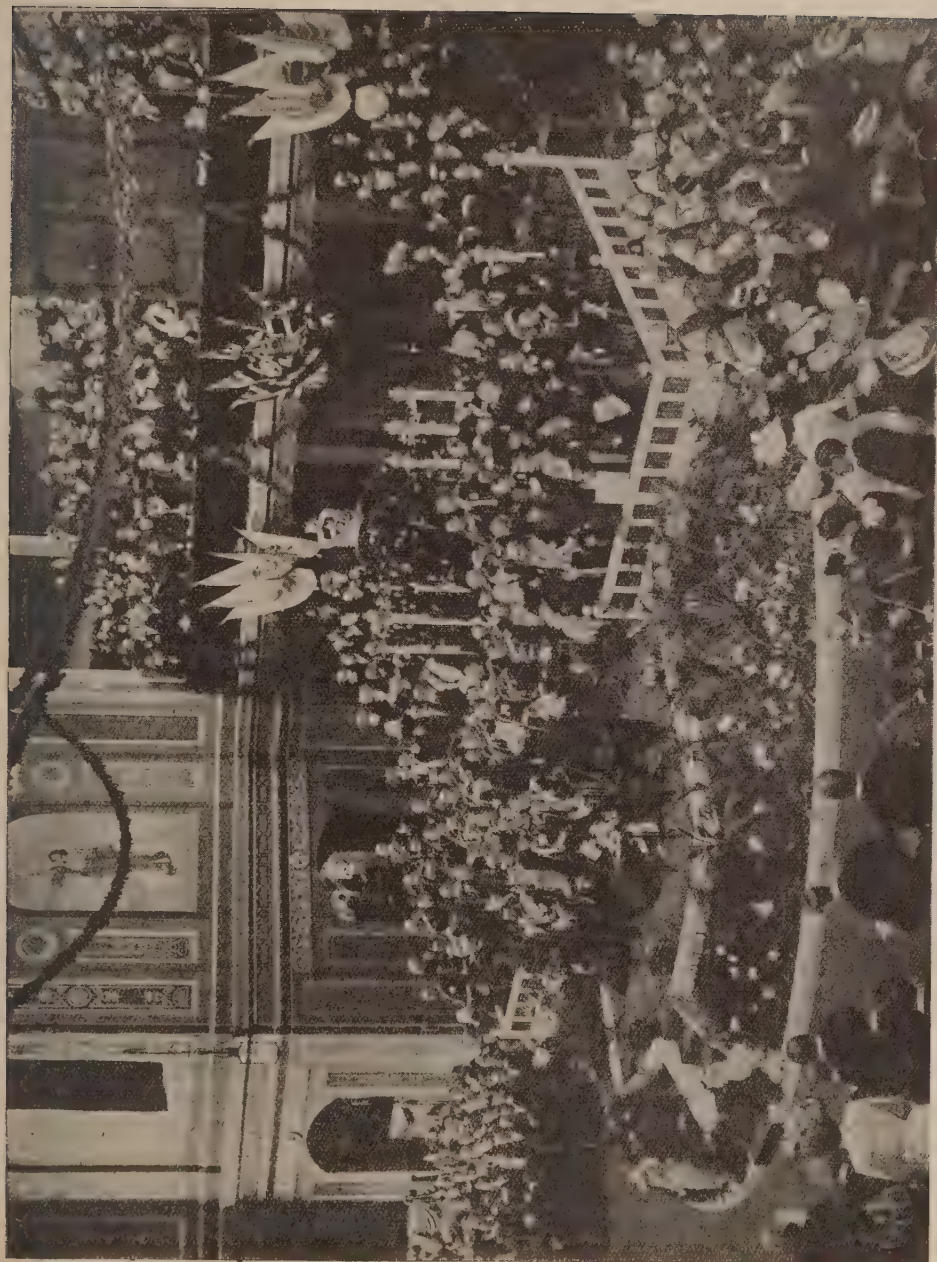
It was the presence of these European "intruders" that secured the adoption of Federation in Australia.

The story is a tangled one, and cannot here be related in detail. But broadly the condition of the islands required the intervention of some external authority to check the lawlessness of European and American traders and to protect the islanders on the one hand and Christian missionaries on the other. But while France and Germany welcomed expansion, Britain shrank from new obligations.

Australians feared that these European intruders might endanger their security, and they pressed for a more active policy. They wished Britain to annex Eastern New

with Germany, and in 1887 to share the control of the New Hebrides with France. Australians now saw that they must draw together in order to protect their interests and to ensure their safety.

Problems of defence and diplomacy, therefore, gave reality in the late 'eighties to the vague talk of federation which had gone on for a generation. Since 1883 attempts had been made to secure joint action by conference, but they had been ineffective because New South Wales had stood aloof. At last, however, New South Wales abandoned its isolation (1889), and in 1891 the principles of



OPENING OF THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT AT MELBOURNE BY THE DUKE OF YORK
(GEORGE V), THURSDAY, MAY 9TH, 1901

From a Photograph by Tetina.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

a federal constitution were agreed upon at an inter-colonial conference at Sydney. Then followed a period in which Australians had to battle against economic disaster, and it was not until 1897 that conferences could be resumed. At last in 1899 an agreement was reached. A bill, drafted by Australian statesmen, was readily enacted in 1900 by the imperial parliament, and on the first day of the new century the five colonies of the mainland were united, together with Tasmania, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

The federal constitution of the commonwealth is a highly scientific instrument of government and its construction and draftsmanship have been warmly praised. It is full of interest, particularly because it provides an elected senate and contains elaborate provisions against the deadlock which might ensue from a conflict of two houses claiming equal authority as the direct representatives of the electorate. But it had one defect, inevitable in the conditions of its origin. It reverted to the American model in leaving great powers to the component states of the commonwealth. Local feeling was strong in Australia, and without an ample recognition of the rights of the federating colonies there would have been no federation. This has sometimes been felt to be a source of weakness. Yet for purposes alike of defence, of economic development and of social progress the commonwealth has found in its federal constitution an instrument of increasing strength.

New Zealand and Federation

New Zealand did not join the commonwealth. It has important interests in common with Australia, but it is a thousand miles away from it, and distance is a serious obstacle to common government. Moreover, New Zealand had tried a rudimentary and defective form of federalism: a rather limited kind of local self-government under provincial councils. For nearly twenty years after the grant of responsible government in 1856 hot debate had raged over this system, some wishing to strengthen and some to abolish it. In 1875 the "centralists" were victorious for reasons which elsewhere

contributed to the triumph of federalism: the need for a common policy on immigration and on public works, such as railways and main roads, coupled with the fact that the central government could alone find means to finance it. In 1876, therefore, the provincial system was abandoned. Hence some New Zealanders were by tradition opposed to federalism, while others, distrusting the absorptive powers of a central government as demonstrated in the experience of their own colony, feared possible encroachments of federal authority upon the independence of New Zealand if she were drawn into the commonwealth.

With this in mind a New Zealand statesman, writing in 1911, declared that: "the English people do not appreciate federal government." It is true that New Zealand declined to enter the Commonwealth of Australia just as Newfoundland preferred to remain outside the Dominion of Canada, for reasons which, in each case, seemed good to those concerned.

The Jamaican Problem

But the British are a practical people, distrustful of theory, who frame their institutions to serve immediate needs. A Jamaican politician might be tempted to say that the British appreciate neither responsible ministries nor representative government, for during the nineteenth century the constitutional history of the West Indies ran counter to that of other colonies. Different conditions produced different results.

In the West Indies the whites were few and the negroes were many. So long as the negroes were slaves it had been possible for their masters to enjoy representative institutions without serious question. But in course of time emancipation created new conditions and a new problem. The negroes were backward and ignorant, but they were free. Were they to share political power or was the white minority to rule as of old? The Jamaican planters evaded this dilemma. Frightened by a serious negro revolt in 1865 they petitioned the home government to relieve them of power in order that they might escape responsibility for the conduct of affairs. In 1866 the representative assembly

GOVERNMENT OF THE WEST INDIES

was abolished, though in 1884 the system was again modified by admitting to a legislative council some representatives elected on an extremely narrow franchise. During the 'seventies the assemblies of several other West Indian colonies were abolished on their own petition. During the second half of the century the trend of policy in the West Indies was towards Crown colony as opposed to representative government. Even in Barbados, which retained the representative system, the executive council was not responsible to the assembly.

Yet the West Indies do not furnish genuine exceptions to the British colonial policy of the century. They illustrate rather the difficulties which may arise when men

habituated to self-government dwell together with peoples not yet ripe for it. Towards such backward races the British felt a growing sense of duty. The readiness with which the home government relieved the white colonists of their privileges and responsibilities can be accounted for by the conviction that the negro population of the West Indies could be most wisely handled under Crown colony government. Where European peoples were alone or mainly concerned the growth of self-government was steadily encouraged. Even in South Africa, where the difficulties were exceptional, the temptation to depart from this healthy tradition was ultimately rejected, and generous trust brought an amazing triumph.



PARLIAMENT HOUSE, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND, 1924

This building replaces the former Parliament House which was destroyed by fire in 1907.

Reproduced from the architect's drawing by permission of the High Commissioner for New Zealand.



"JUBILEE COINAGE" (Actual Size) ISSUED IN 1887

Sixpence.

Shilling.

Double Florin.

Double Sovereign.

Half-crown.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE NEW IMPERIALISM (1895-1902) AND THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH AFRICA (1874-1910)

SALISBURY'S third administration has been called "the best and strongest and most successful of modern times." In retrospect Salisbury made the more modest claim that "a difficult experiment" had been carried through "with very fair success."* Between these two verdicts it may be well to strike a mean. Salisbury, Balfour, Chamberlain and Devonshire were giants in a ministry which contained men of great and varied gifts. They were sup-

ported in the Commons by a majority of unusual strength, and they could command the almost unquestioning allegiance of the House of Lords.

Yet Salisbury was not wrong when he called his ministry an "experiment." Less than ten years before, his chief lieutenants had stood as far asunder as the poles. They had drawn together to defend the Irish union. These differences were partially concealed because some dividing questions of domestic policy slumbered for a time. But on other

* Holland, *Life of Devonshire*, ii, 261 and 279.



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ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE, JUNE 22, 1897

From the Painting by Andrew C. Gow, R.A., in the Guildhall Art Gallery, London.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP LEGISLATION

questions Conservatives and Liberal Unionists still diverged sharply from one another. Only by the skilful guidance of Salisbury and Devonshire was the ministry enabled to avoid the pitfalls that beset it.

Chamberlain and Conservatism

Since the Liberal split the Liberal Unionists had, however, learnt to work with Conservatives. Habits of co-operation and of mutual forbearance had been formed. And the alliance which had sustained the second Salisbury cabinet had been cemented by three years of opposition. Chamberlain, the storm petrel of the coalition, was in some ways its strength. Gifted above others of his day with the power to kindle the popular imagination, he had not consciously shed his early Radicalism, and he rallied to the ministry forces which would otherwise have flowed along Liberal channels. But he was no longer the revolutionary who had disquieted Conservatives and made Devonshire uneasy, and he accepted the office of colonial secretary, which soon diverted his mind from domestic questions and tended to absorb his interest and his energy.

Yet Conservatism accepted some part of Chamberlain's social programme as the price of the Liberal Unionist alliance. The surrender was in reality smaller than it appeared. Both the lingering Conservative tradition of paternal government and Randolph Churchill's teaching of "Tory democracy" were easily reconciled with new demands for protective legislation on behalf of the industrial classes. On the other hand, Chamberlain had not only lost some of his intimate touch with working-class opinion, but he was compelled to work in close association with Devonshire, who more than any of his old Liberal colleagues had disliked the notes of social aggression and of class warfare in the Birmingham programme. While the volcanic elements in Chamberlain's Radicalism had thus been cooled by time and circumstance, there was a liberal impulse in Conservatism, and many Conservatives were predisposed to welcome any reasonable measures of social amelioration.

Domestic legislation ran, therefore, along the line of providing better protection for

the industrial classes without disturbance of the existing social order. An act of 1896 was designed to promote industrial peace by providing facilities for the establishment of conciliation boards, and for the registration with the board of trade of settlements made by conciliation or arbitration. In 1897 the law of employers' liability was extended so as to entitle a workman, with certain limitations, to compensation for injuries "arising out of and in the course of his employment," and the general effect of this has been to secure the insurance of employees against accidents. An addition to the Truck Acts (1896) was intended to secure to the employee his full wages, undiminished by vexatious fines or unreasonable deductions. By the Factory and Workshop Consolidation Act of 1901 an earlier act (1891) compelling the employer to furnish in writing to each worker particulars of the rate of wages was reinforced, the responsibility of local authorities for supervising the sanitary condition of factories and workshops was increased, and an attempt was made to aid the prevention of sweating by requiring employers to supply lists of employees who did their work at home. In 1903 by the Employment of Children Act an endeavour was made to prevent the employment of children in conditions which injured their health or interfered with their education. A strain of protective fatherliness runs through all this legislation, but though seldom drastic it was generally useful. On the other hand, the alluring promise of old-age pensions which Chamberlain had made during the general election was not fulfilled.

Further Local Government Reforms

Possibly Liberal Unionist influence may be detected in the act of 1898 which allowed an "authorized person," generally the minister, to perform marriages in nonconformist chapels without the presence of a registrar. Conservative influence can certainly be traced in the exemption of agricultural land from half the local rates. As the deficiency was made good from the taxes this was an indirect way of forcing the towns to subsidize the country districts. A much-debated act of 1899 carried the reorganization of

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DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

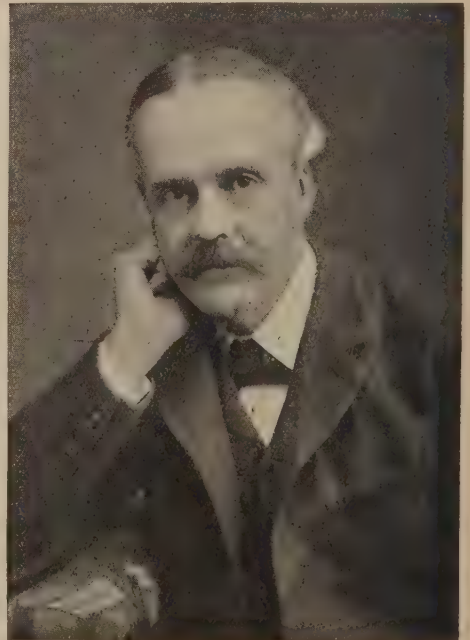
From the Painting by Sir H. von Herkomer, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

London government, begun by the establishment of the county council, a stage further by setting up borough councils in place of the old vestries. In Ireland a beginning was made with the policy of "killing Home Rule by kindness." Elected councils were established in the Irish counties (1898). In order to foster needed improvements in communications an act of 1896 authorized assistance by grants or loans towards the laying down of light railways or by grants towards the maintenance of coaching or steamboat services. And in 1899 there was established a Council for Agriculture and Technical Instruction which proved, under skilful administration, to be fruitful of much good to Ireland.

During these years, nevertheless, interest centred upon neither domestic nor Irish affairs, but upon Africa. The conflict between Briton and Boer reached its crisis. For over twenty years after the recognition of its autonomy by the Sand River Convention the history of the Transvaal had been consistently unhappy. Divided by local and personal factions, weakened by incessant

warfare against native tribes, with an inefficient government and a bankrupt treasury, the young state seemed in the early 'seventies to be on the verge of collapse. Rightly or wrongly it was believed that the Transvaal was threatened with a Zulu invasion which the Boers were too weak to resist, and that the danger to the Transvaal menaced the whole white population of South Africa. Under the impression that a majority of the farmers desired British protection not merely as a security against the Zulus but as the only means of escape from anarchy, the British government annexed the Transvaal in April, 1877.

It soon appeared that the advisers of the government had misjudged the feelings of the Transvaalers. Despite the increasing prosperity which followed the annexation, a majority of the farmers, led by Paul Kruger, besought the British government to restore their independence. Carnarvon, the colonial secretary, was an enthusiast to the point of fanaticism in the cause of colonial federation, and looked upon the annexation of the



ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

From a Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company.

THE TRANSVAAL'S CLAIM TO INDEPENDENCE

Transvaal as a first step towards the creation of a federal South Africa. He refused his consent to a petition which would have ruined his pet scheme, and his successor, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach,* confirmed his refusal. In 1879 the defeat of the Zulus by Chelmsford and the subsequent establishment of a British protectorate over Zululand removed the immediate danger of an onslaught of the blacks upon the whites. The ministry still persisted in an unwise attempt to force a federal scheme upon South Africa before opinion was ripe for it. This headlong policy exasperated the Boers, alienated the Cape ministry, which was in favour of confederation but resented dictation from home, and postponed for thirty years whatever chance there may have been of a Union of South Africa.

Meanwhile the Boers, encouraged by Gladstone's declaration that annexation was "the invasion of a free people," continued to assert their claims to independence. When Gladstone took office they expected that these claims would be recognized. They were disappointed, and promptly organized armed resistance to the British power. For a Liberal ministry, and especially for its chief, the position was a difficult one. It became more difficult when news reached England of disasters to British arms, and particularly of the small but spectacular defeat of a British force at Majuba Hill. But before Majuba a letter had been sent to Kruger accepting an offer to cease hostilities on the promise that a commission of inquiry should be sent to the Transvaal.† To this promise the ministry adhered; it could hardly have done otherwise, for Chamberlain and Bright had threatened to resign unless terms were made with the Boers. By the Convention of Pretoria (August, 1881) the autonomy of the Transvaal was restored, subject to the suzerainty of the Crown, and to other conditions of which the most important was that the foreign relations of the republic should be under British control.

During the next fifteen years, which Kruger devoted to the establishment of a deter-

* Hicks-Beach succeeded Carnarvon in January, 1878.

† The letter took eight days to reach Kruger, who received it the day after Majuba had been fought.

mined but narrow-minded and oligarchical government over the Boer farmers, three forces were slowly developing to the menace of his peace. Since the beginning of the century a host of explorers had been busily mapping out the Dark Continent. In the 'eighties there began a scramble amongst the great powers of Europe for territory or "spheres of influence" in the vast unappro-



PRESIDENT KRUGER

From a Photograph by G. T. Fernyhough, Pietermaritzburg.

priated regions of Africa. The consequence was that the Boer republics were gradually enclosed. Their expansion, hitherto unhindered save by native difficulties, was checked, and they were completely cut off from communication with the sea save through territories controlled by European powers. On the west the proclamation of a British protectorate over Bechuanaland, the southern portion of which was annexed in 1885, and on the east the formal annexation of Zululand in 1887, placed barriers in the way of Boer migration. Then Cecil Rhodes, with his opulent imagination, began to dream of further extensions of the British dominion, and applied his great practical gifts to the organization of the Chartered Company, which in 1889 took over

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the great region of Rhodesia and so hemmed in the Boers on the north. The addition of a strip of coast line to Natal in 1894 completed their isolation.

Land-locked, debarred from expansion, and able to communicate with the outer world only through British or Portuguese territory, the Boers at the same time found

their habits, and they had no wish to join in the exploitation of the gold-fields. The Uitlanders, as the immigrants were called, soon outnumbered the Boers. But they were almost entirely excluded from political privileges, though the Boers, shrewd enough to see the taxable value of the mines they despised, gradually found means to extract



DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICAN SPHERES OF INFLUENCE, SHOWING THE ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE TRANSVAAL

themselves threatened from within by a host of immigrants of alien traditions whose interests conflicted with their own. Since 1879 the British government had been aware that the Transvaal was rich in gold. It had been predicted that British prospectors would soon be attracted thither. In 1886 fresh discoveries of gold drew to the Transvaal a large mining population, mainly of British nationality. But the Boers were conservative. They were farmers and did not wish to be anything else. They disliked the intruders, they resented any disturbance of

from the new-comers the greater part of the revenue required for the government of the republic. The Uitlanders grew clamorous for a share in the government for which they paid. But the Boers were unyielding. They had made great sacrifices to secure their independence and to preserve their traditional modes of life. Ill at ease with their new neighbours, they were determined not to enfranchise a majority whose conceptions of government, religion and society were alien from their own.

Encirclement and immigration frightened

THE JAMESON RAID

the Boers. They were less conscious, perhaps, of danger from the growth of imperial faith in Great Britain. Until the early 'seventies the British people had been suspicious of colonial expansion. Natural reaction from exaggerated caution, the manifestly increasing prosperity and importance of the colonies, and a slowly dawning realization of the vast power acquired in India had turned the current of opinion. Caution gave place to confidence. Then Disraeli had skilfully fostered imperial pride. And although Gladstone and Salisbury had moved with caution, the opening up of Africa in the 'eighties led to a great increase of territorial responsibilities. Already in 1887 the pomps of Queen Victoria's jubilee seemed like a demonstration of imperial sway. This rather belated confidence of the British people in its mission as a ruling race of far-flung power and great responsibilities was not without virtue. But the new imperialism had its besetting sins no less than the grudging and contracted colonial policy of fifty years before. Confidence may pass quickly into exultant assertiveness and pride into intolerable aggression. There were traces of both in the British temper of the 'nineties.

When Chamberlain became colonial secretary he soon turned as enthusiastic for imperial development as, in his Radical days, he had been for the transformation of England. He not only served the colonies well, but he stirred public interest in colonial questions just as, a generation earlier, Palmerston had excited interest in foreign affairs. Meanwhile Rhodes was seeing visions of a united South Africa and even of a consolidated British power stretching far beyond its bounds. From his point of vantage as prime minister at the Cape he was watching keenly the struggle between the Boers and the Uitlanders. On New Year's Day, 1896, came startling news. Six hundred troopers under Dr. Starr Jameson, administrator of Rhodesia, had ridden into the Transvaal to aid an expected rising of the Uitlanders on the Rand. No rising took place, for the Johannesburg reformers quarrelled among themselves. Jameson, unsupported by the Johannesburgers, found himself committed to a hopeless raid when he had expected to

join a formidable revolt. Within six days the raid collapsed at Krugersdorp (on January 2nd, 1896), its ringleaders were taken and some of them were punished.

In itself the Jameson Raid was merely a startling incident, as picturesque as it was improper. Chamberlain promptly disavowed it. But the Boers argued that



CECIL RHODES

From a Photograph by Bassano.

Jameson was the agent of Rhodes, and that Rhodes would not have moved without expectation of support from Chamberlain. The raid inflamed the suspicions of the Boers. Convinced that they must soon fight for their independence, they prepared for a struggle against the British, and they themselves hastened the conflict when they wrung from the exasperated Uitlanders the money needed for their military preparations.

The contest was not long postponed. The Uitlanders had genuine grievances. The Boers were full of alarm. The British people, now in a mood of aggressive imperialism, gained confidence during 1897 and 1898 in

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their military strength from the efficiency with which Kitchener organized the reconquest of the Sudan. In 1899 Chamberlain pressed Kruger for a reform of the franchise in the Transvaal as a first step towards a redress of the grievances of the Uitlanders. He held that the suzerain power was entitled to insist upon the rights of British subjects;

At the beginning of October, 1899, the Transvaal government launched an ultimatum that was virtually a declaration of war. The Orange Free State had laboured fitfully for peace, but it made common cause with the Transvaal. Together the republics were able to put over fifty thousand men into the field. Their armies fought with all the



AREA OF FIELD OPERATIONS IN TUGELA RIVER-LADYSMITH-COLENSO DISTRICT DURING THE BOER WAR, 1899-1902

while Kruger, on his part, regarded British suzerainty as an empty form. There were pacific influences on both sides. Even a cabinet colleague sometimes doubted the wisdom of Chamberlain's "new diplomacy," which he found too public and too provocative.* Among the Boers there was a group of able men who struggled against the obstinacy of Kruger for reasonable reforms. Kruger did at last consent to a reformed franchise, hedged about with limitations, but his offer was conditional on the abandonment of British suzerainty. The British government rejected this condition, and it soon became clear that the issue would be war.

* Elliot, *Goschen*, ii, 220-1.

advantages of an intimate knowledge of difficult ground and of superior readiness and preparation. It was as if the challenger had also secured choice of ground and weapons. Britain had the greater strength and she was aided by her colonies, but she required time to muster her forces. Before the British were ready to meet their attackers the Boers had invested Kimberley and Mafeking and, marching down upon Natal, had invested a large British force at Ladysmith.

The war fell into three parts. In the first, which lasted until February, 1900, the Boers bade successful defiance to the repeated assaults of Sir Redvers Buller upon the positions which they had taken up behind

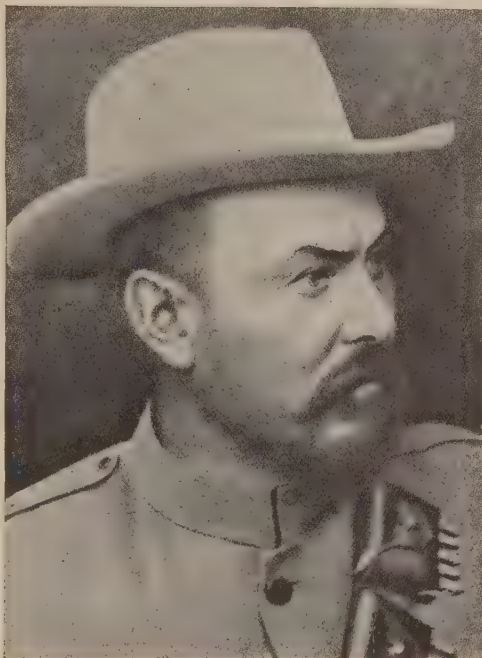
THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

the line of the Tugela, while in the west they fought to a standstill an army under Methuen, which attempted to relieve beleaguered Kimberley. In the second, Roberts, who had taken over the chief command in January, with Kitchener as chief of staff, decided to make his main attack upon the Boers from the west and to strike at the centre of the republics. He advanced in February. Within a month he drew near Bloemfontein, and the Boer presidents sued for peace. They sued in vain, for they still insisted upon the claims of the republics to untrammelled independence.

Roberts then entered Bloemfontein and annexed the Orange Free State. Meantime Kimberley and Mafeking had been relieved, and Buller had fought his way to Ladysmith. In June, Roberts swept forward to Pretoria, and defeated the Boer army in a strenuous engagement at Diamond Hill. In September the Transvaal was annexed. Roberts, believing that the war was over, returned to England in November. But the war was not over. Its third phase proved to be the longest, and in some ways the most harrowing of all. For more than eighteen months the Boer commanders, adept in all kinds of irregular fighting, maintained a guerrilla war with great ingenuity and skill. Kitchener gradually but systematically wore them down. Yet it was not until June, 1902, that the leaders of the remaining Boer forces agreed to terms of peace.

By the Peace of Vereeniging the annexation of the Transvaal and of the Orange Free State was confirmed. The Boers were given two securities: a guarantee that the Taal should remain the language of the Dutch schools, and a promise of self-governing institutions. For five years the annexed territories were governed as Crown colonies with nominated legislatures. But in 1907 they were accorded responsible government. The Boers secured majorities at the polls, and leaders like Louis Botha, who had commanded at Diamond Hill, became responsible ministers of the Crown. Even responsible government was only a stage in the constitutional development of South Africa. British settlers were numerous in the Trans-

vaal, while a large proportion of the inhabitants of Cape Colony were linked to the Boers by ties of blood and kinship. This intermingling of races made the existing political divisions to some degree unreal. The white races were, moreover, outnumbered by the natives. And in South Africa, as in Canada and Australia, a solution of



GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA

From a Photograph.

railway and tariff problems could most readily be found under a common government. In 1910 the four colonies came together in the Union of South Africa. The constitution of the union is remarkable, not merely because it was rapidly achieved by statesmen whose memories of war were recent and bitter, but also because it involved a more complete surrender of the powers of the colonies to the central government than either of the federal constitutions which had preceded it. So restricted were the provincial powers of the former colonies that South Africa became not so much a federation as a unitary state.



"ONLY HIS PLAY" (11)

"Russian Force attacked the Afghans, killing 500 men."—Telegram.

From the "Punch" Cartoon of April 18th, 1885, by permission of the Proprietors.

CHAPTER XXIV

INDIA SINCE THE MUTINY (1858-1914)

IF the sixty years after the mutiny were less crowded with swift movement and picturesque incident than the first century of British supremacy in India, they were not less important than those earlier years. They were years of political consolidation, of unceasing watchfulness over the shifting outposts of the Indian Empire, where definite boundaries are seldom more than an unattainable dream, and of constant preoccupation with problems of defence and with their relation to British foreign policy. They were years, also, of steady attention to the economic needs of India and of its

peoples, and of conscious efforts to improve the administration, coupled with less conscious changes and adaptations in its working. They were years during which there grew up in India an educated class, gradually making new claims to a share in the government of the country, and means had to be sought of satisfying these demands without straining, on the one hand, the nascent capacity of educated Indians for self-government, or betraying, on the other hand, the trust which the British must fulfil on behalf of the uneducated millions of the Indian Empire.

INDIAN FRONTIER POLICY

Canning remained in India for three years after the mutiny in order to complete his great task of appeasement. The marks of his work were care for the interests of the tillers of the soil, encouragement of higher education, the enactment (1860) of the Penal Code (drafted by Macaulay almost a generation earlier), the reorganization of the army, and strenuous efforts to restore the finances of the country, burdened since the mutiny with a heavy legacy of debt. When Canning left India in March, 1862, he had carried out the administrative changes required by the transfer of government from the Company to the Crown, and he had assuaged the bitterness which was a natural aftermath of the mutiny. But he had achieved success only at a great price—at the cost of Lady Canning's life and of his own health. When Canning left India he was already a dying man. Always unsparing of himself, he had overtaxed his strength. Health and personal happiness had been the sacrifices which he had made for the good of India.

During the next fourteen years successive viceroys maintained the traditions which Canning had set. These viceroys were all men of high character, firm purpose, and studied moderation, who worked for the peace and prosperity of India, and resisted the temptation to engage in dangerous adventures beyond its borders. Elgin, who brought considerable experience to his task, had no opportunity to do a great work for India such as he had done for Canada. He lived for less than two years after his arrival (1862-3). Then Sir John Lawrence crowned his labours on behalf of the country to which throughout a long and distinguished career he had given his affection as well as his service by a viceroyalty of five years (1864-9). Though Lord Mayo (1869-72) has been adversely criticized for some of his financial and administrative changes, his reign was marked by assiduous endeavours to ease the frontier problems of India through the cultivation of friendly relations with border states. Northbrook (1872-6), financially more fortunate than his predecessors, handled the great famine of 1874 with unexampled skill. Of each of the

viceroys of these fourteen peaceful years it may be said, as it was said of Northbrook, "he gave the land rest."

Throughout the period, however, there were bolder spirits who desired a more active frontier policy than was approved by Elgin or Lawrence, by Mayo or Northbrook. Britain was made restive during these years by the advances of Russia in Central Asia, and



LORD NORTHBROOK

From a Photograph by Bassano.

there emerged two sharply opposed schools of opinion, which differed in particular as to the policy which should be adopted towards Afghanistan by the government of India. Until 1876 the arguments of Lawrence prevailed. He maintained that while it was necessary and right to cultivate friendly relations with Afghanistan, any attempt to augment our influence or control by active interference in its affairs would increase our difficulties instead of diminishing them. The difficulties of Russia would be decreased, it was held, "if we left our own frontier and met her half-way in a difficult country." This view prevailed until the end of Northbrook's administration, and probably it was

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because Northbrook was unwilling to abandon the Lawrence tradition that in 1876 he returned to England.

Disraeli wished to pursue a more picturesque and enterprising policy, which had two aspects, one innocuous and the other dangerous. He wished to strengthen the ties which bound India to the Crown. For



"NEW CROWNS FOR OLD ONES"

On April 27th, 1876, the Royal Titles Bill received the royal assent, and on May 1st Queen Victoria was proclaimed in London Empress of India.

From the "Punch" Cartoon, April 15th, 1876, by permission of the Proprietors.

this purpose the Prince of Wales made a ceremonial visit to India in 1875, and on New Year's Day, 1877, the queen was formally proclaimed at Delhi as Empress of India or Kaisar-i-Hind. The moment chosen was not propitious, for India was in the grip of famine, but the new title can have done little harm, and may, in the long run, have done some good. In its other aspect, Disraeli's policy was more dangerous. "The critical state of affairs in Central Asia demands a statesman,"

he wrote to Lord Lytton, when inviting him to succeed Northbrook. In ominous words the prime minister hinted at a more active policy, and promised Lytton the opportunity of obtaining an enduring fame. This was a plain indication that the policy of Lord Lawrence was to be reversed. Lytton shared Disraeli's fears of Russian aggression. He attempted to offer a check to Russia by forcing a British resident upon the Amir of Afghanistan. The amir, caught between the two great rivals and unable to placate England without antagonizing Russia, refused, to submit to the viceroy's demands. Afghanistan was invaded, and the amir was dethroned. Another was set up in his stead, and the government of India attempted to control the foreign policy of Afghanistan. It seemed as if the bold and aggressive policy had succeeded.

But success was only momentary. The Afghans are never easy to control, and the new amir was unable to master them. As in 1839, they soon turned upon the intruders. In September, 1879, the British minister was murdered with all his following. Roberts, however, speedily brought the Afghans to their knees. In less than six weeks he was master of Kabul and was harrying the unruly tribesmen. But Lytton himself now recognized that Afghanistan was a "rat-trap" for the British, and he was already intent upon discovering a way of escape from it when he was succeeded by the pacific Lord Ripon. Abdur Rahman, a prince who could control his people, was

established as amir, and showed that he knew how to reconcile friendship towards the British with the maintenance of his own independence and self-respect. Ripon abandoned the attempt to control Afghan affairs, but in order to ward off the danger of Russian influence the amir was given a subsidy, and his frontiers were guaranteed against the attacks of other powers. Even this guarantee was not without danger, for a frontier dispute at Penjdeh

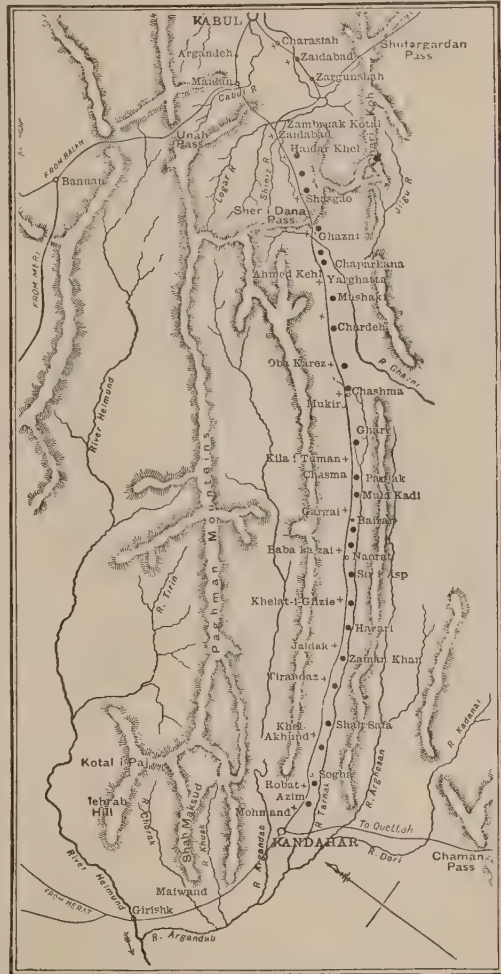
INDIAN EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

in 1885 went near to provoking war between Russia and Britain. Since that date successive commissions have delimited the Afghan boundaries, but even the *entente* with Russia did not wholly allay the nervousness excited in the minds of some British politicians by the successive advances of Russian power in Asia.

Ripon's administration (1880-4) has always stood out, in Indian opinion, as the most sympathetic in the recent history of the country. This was partly due to the fact that it fell to his lot to restore the direct government of Mysore to its maharajah, partly to the fact that he "unmuzzled" the vernacular press, but still more to his well-meant attempt to establish a system of local self-government. His municipalities and local boards, mainly elective, have not proved as successful as it was once hoped they might be, but they were hailed as an advance towards representative institutions of a more comprehensive kind, for which, indeed, Ripon himself intended them to be a training-ground.

Yet another change had an importance scarcely appreciated at the time, though it had far-reaching results of which the full effects cannot even yet be foreseen. Under Ripon's influence the government of India began to encourage the establishment of high schools and colleges which, aided by government grants but under Indian control, were mainly staffed by native teachers. These institutions were often ill prepared for their work because their revenues were not large enough for the maintenance of fully efficient staffs or adequate equipment. There followed two results, one good and the other bad ; a rapidly increasing number of Indians received a western education of a kind, and obtained some command of the English tongue, but on the other hand this education was dangerously imperfect. In this respect Indian education went through a phase not unlike that through which British elementary education had passed a generation earlier. It became more wide-

spread, but the quality remained poor because the educational institutions were supported on too parsimonious a scale. In



ROUTE OF THE BRITISH ARMY ON ITS MARCH
UNDER GENERAL SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS FROM
KABUL TO RELIEVE KANDAHAR, AUGUST 9-31, 1880.

India the consequences were more serious than in England, for the educated classes secured for the first time a common vehicle of communication through their command of the English language, and to some extent a common stock of western political ideas, without sufficient training to save them

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from rash applications of their new knowledge in conditions to which it was not always suited, and to which they were not yet sufficiently skilled to adapt it.

The problem of a large body of articulate but insufficiently disciplined opinion is not peculiar to India. The countries of western Europe have not yet solved it. But in India it was particularly dangerous, for it touched only the literate classes, often rather un-



MARQUESS OF RIPON

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

practical, while people of other castes, trained and practised in other ways of life, whose mental habits might have helped them to adjust the balance, were shut out, by the want of any general system of elementary education, from community with the new ideas or from the power of criticizing them when they were passed on to them in the vernacular in the form of political catchwords. The result was that there grew up in India a demand for political changes, inspired by western ideas, which tended to outrun the capacity of the people to effect them with profit or safety to themselves.

Dufferin (1884-8) was once more troubled, not only with frontier problems, but by the complication of Indian affairs with British foreign policy. British merchants and

traders in Burma had long been agitating against the Emperor of Ava, who was not slow to give them occasion for complaint. Yet it is doubtful whether their outcries would have received much attention if it had not been for the alarm excited by French advances in Indo-China and the fear that France might establish a predominant influence in Upper Burma. When Salisbury complained in 1885 of the activities of a French agent, his acts were disavowed, and he was recalled. But the fears remained, and when Lord Dufferin had occasion to complain of the ill-treatment of British traders by the Burmese authorities, he went further and insisted that the external relations of Burma should be placed under British control. King Thibaw and his advisers deserve little pity. It is hardly denied that his government was cruel and incompetent; nor is it questioned that Upper Burma has gained by British administration. Yet Britain might well have made out a stronger case before resorting to threats. Dufferin put his demands, however, in the form of an ultimatum. It was rejected. Burma was invaded, King Thibaw was deported, and his country was annexed. Order was restored; brigands were hunted down; the resources of the country were then developed, and its prosperity has since greatly increased. But the British power now touched the French and became as sensitive to the movements of its neighbour on the east as it was to the power of Russia on the north-west.

It is yet too soon to speak with confidence of the work of succeeding viceroys. Lord Lansdowne (1888-94) had to deal with an uneasy frontier in the north-west, and his policy has been severely criticized. During his viceroyalty a new constitutional experiment was tried. In 1892 a representative element was introduced into the legislative councils, and their powers of discussion were enlarged. But the nominated members of these councils still greatly outnumbered the elected, and this change was little more than a tentative experiment. Elgin (1894-9), like Lansdowne, had to struggle with the disorders which are endemic on the north-western border, but he had also to face

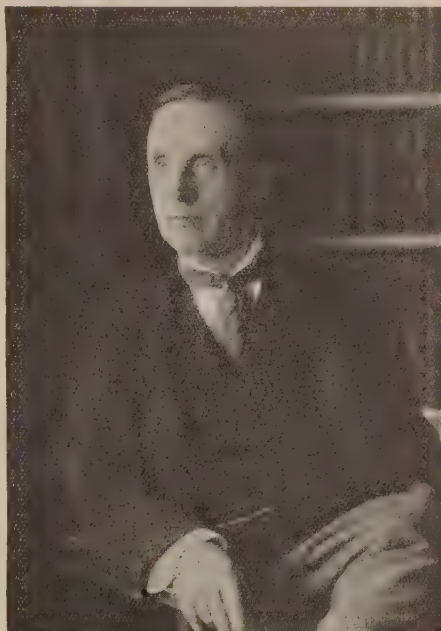
MORLEY AND INDIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT

the most terrible and widespread famine hitherto known (1896), and to fight a serious outbreak of bubonic plague, which required sanitary precautions of a kind exasperating to a people by whom they were ill understood.

Lord Curzon (1899-1905) was vigorous, picturesque, and autocratic. He tightened up the administrative machinery. He showed deep sympathy for eastern history, literature and art, but unfortunately this very sympathy with the past led him to favour methods of government which the India of his day believed that it was outgrowing, and made him, whether justly or unjustly, appear as a reactionary of the worst kind. When he retired in 1905 India was in a ferment of agitation, and this reached its height in Bengal on account of the partition and rearrangement of the province in a manner intended to secure greater administrative efficiency. Agitation sometimes gave place to violence, and violence in its turn to assassination.

When John Morley (Lord Morley) became secretary of State for India in 1905 he attempted to satisfy Indian demands for self-government. Morley held that India was not yet ripe for self-government in the sense in which it is understood in the colonies. But he attempted to introduce some Indian element into every important branch of government. In the provinces he provided for an elected majority on the legislative councils, whose powers were increased, and for the addition of Indian members to the executive councils. His changes in the central government of India did not go quite so far. There were to be elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council, but these members were not to be a majority of the council. An Indian member was added to the Viceroy's Executive Council, and two Indian members were to sit on the Council of India which advised the secretary of State in London.

These were great advances, and it may be that Lord Morley and Lord Minto, the viceroy, went as far as it was then safe to go. But these reforms whetted the appetite without satisfying it; and it is possible that they marked a dangerous stage of transition, for they gave great power and great



JOHN MORLEY (LORD MORLEY)

From a Photograph by Elliott and Fry Limited.

opportunity for agitation without supplying the curb of responsibility which makes political criticism safe and healthy.

Agitation died down, however, in 1911, when King George V assumed the crown of India at Delhi. It died down only for a time. Yet when the European war broke out in 1914 India was, for the most part, as eager as the self-governing dominions to take its share in the conflict. Its princes and its peoples joined in the common struggle.



SEAL OF EDWARD VII

CHAPTER XXV

EPILOGUE (1902-1914)

WHEN the historian attempts to deal with the twentieth century his task is beset with hazards. Much evidence is still undisclosed, and events yet fresh in memory have not fallen into perspective. No more than a rapid and provisional sketch will therefore be attempted here of the twelve crowded and important years between the close of the Boer War in 1902 and the outbreak in 1914 of the Great War, which tried the British people as they had not been tested since the downfall of Napoleon.

Four characteristics of the period stand out with some clearness. First, the British people turned with renewed and absorbed interest to domestic affairs; secondly, scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions multiplied with astonishing rapidity and were speedily applied to practical uses; thirdly, Britain emerged from her diplomatic isolation and became involved in European affairs to an extent which her people, absorbed in domestic politics and the industrial struggle, scarcely realized at the time; and lastly, the somewhat arrogant

imperialism of the previous decade slowly waned before the saner and more generous vision of a British Commonwealth of Peoples.

The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 had marked a break with tradition. Edward VII gave the monarchy new significance as a social force and as an influence in foreign affairs, though some of the movements to which he gave shape and direction had begun earlier. George V (1910) placed himself at the service of his people, at home and throughout the commonwealth, in ways no less useful because they were less obtrusive. Yet both kings skilfully resisted all attempts to draw them into the warfare of domestic politics, though they made the monarchy increasingly important to the unity of the nations who owned their sway. On the political stage there were great changes. With the retirement of Salisbury in 1902 the last of the elder statesmen passed from the scene. Mr. Balfour, who succeeded him, was soon struggling vainly to preserve unbroken the great coalition from which Salisbury's ministry had drawn its strength.



EDWARD VII

From the Painting by P. Tennyson Co'te.

Chamberlain revived in 1903 the doctrines of Protection, and thereby he split both the party and the ministry. Mr. Balfour, seek-

ing a middle position between Protection and unrestricted Free Trade, lost the help of Chamberlain on the one hand and of leading

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Free Traders on the other. With an attenuated ministry he struggled on until the end of 1905, when he gave way to a Liberal government under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. At the general election of 1906 the Liberals were established in power with a great majority, and their position was confirmed in 1910, though with less emphasis, at two general elections.

Yet, looking back, it can be seen that these changes of ministry, however complete the reversals of policy which they seemed to involve, affected the persistent tendencies of the period less strongly than might well have been expected. Ministries, whether Liberal or Conservative, were alike compelled to enlarge the sphere of government in order to meet the urgent needs of the country and the demands of the people; in foreign affairs there was remarkable continuity of policy; imperial questions were viewed by the two parties from slightly different angles, but in many aspects they came more and more to be regarded as above party; and the industrial and commercial development of the country went steadily on, with the usual alternations of confidence and depression, whatever might be the fortune of parties or of policies.

The Education Problem

Education, for example, was the subject of bitter controversies, that are not yet laid to rest. But the educational system of the country was transformed from top to bottom during these years. Mr. Balfour's act of 1902* made it possible to raise the standard of elementary schools, whether publicly provided or under voluntary control, to a uniform level of efficiency. It enabled the local education authorities, which replaced the school boards, to establish a network of secondary schools, and to increase the provision for technical and other forms of advanced instruction. The Liberals disliked many features of the act, but they failed in their efforts to change it, and it was by the administrative action of a Liberal minister that more ample provision was made for training the teachers required to carry the

* A special act for London was passed in 1903.

act into satisfactory effect. And it was neither Liberal nor Conservative ministers, but groups of enlightened and public-spirited enthusiasts who extended and developed during these years the university colleges of the great cities and succeeded, between 1900 and 1909, in establishing six new and thriving universities.

Poverty and Unemployment

Liberals and Conservatives were both impelled, though in different ways, to seek remedies for poverty and unemployment. It was generally felt that a country which, despite occasional set-backs, was increasing in wealth and prosperity must look for means more efficient and humane than were provided by the poor law, for the relief of temporary destitution and of impoverished old age. Even Chamberlain's campaign for Protection was partly inspired by the desire to find a weapon against unemployment. Mr. Balfour set on foot a great inquiry into the working of the poor law. The Liberal ministry provided for old age pensions (1908) and established labour exchanges (1909). It worked out a system of insurance against sickness and unemployment. And it tried, in successive budgets, to adjust more evenly the burden of the taxation necessitated by the extension of the responsibilities of the State and by the naval and military requirements of an unrestful world.

It was this use of financial power which brought the Liberal ministry into conflict with the House of Lords. In 1909 the Lords were enraged by the budget, and, straining the custom of the constitution, they ventured to reject it. The ministry accepted the challenge. At the beginning of 1910 it appealed to the electorate and was confirmed in power. The budget was carried, and after a second general election in December, 1910, the Parliament Act (1911) was passed to limit the veto of the Lords. Broadly, this act took from the Lords all power to obstruct in any important degree the financial measures of the Commons, and made it possible to enact without their assent any bill which had passed the Commons in three successive sessions. So far as it touched finance this was merely to

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN

confirm by statute a constitutional custom long respected as binding, but with regard to other forms of legislation it was a constitutional revolution.

Parliament and Trade Unionism

Liberals and Conservatives were no longer, however, the only parties in the State. The infant Labour party had recovered from the disasters of 1895 and 1900. In the parliament of 1906 it was about forty strong. Its success was partly due to a legal decision which threatened the effective existence of trade unionism and drove the working man to use his strength at the polls in order to protect rights which he had believed to be already established. The Trades Disputes Acts (1906) restored the position of trade unions by giving them immunity against civil actions in respect of acts committed by or on behalf of the unions, and also conferred certain privileges on officials of the unions when acting in furtherance of trade disputes.* But no sooner was protection given to trade unionism in the exercise of its industrial function than its political activities were curtailed. In 1909 the Osborne judgment deprived the unions of the power which they had long been supposed to possess and had exercised of making levies upon their members for political purposes. In the general elections of 1910 the Labour party was, in consequence, partially crippled. In 1911 a small part of the Labour grievance was removed by the payment of members of parliament, but it was not until 1913 that the Trade Union Act legalized, with some limitations, the political expenditure of the trade unions. The long delay before this act was passed caused bitter discontent, and turned disappointed trade unionists from political to industrial action—one among many causes of the fevered outbreak of strikes during the year 1911. Ultimately, however, the Osborne controversy strengthened the Labour party, for it demonstrated the need of trade unionism for political safeguards and for friends in parliament strong enough to enforce them.

Industrial violence, though it never ran to the extremes which seemed possible in

1911, was symptomatic of a general impatience with constitutional procedure. The parliamentary machine, clogged with an excess of business, moved slowly. Though it did much excellent work during these years it moved too haltingly for the advocates of women's suffrage. Both the growing army of professional women and the still larger number of women engaged in industry now demanded the franchise. There was much sympathy with their claims, but there was also much determined opposition to them. Impatient of delays the militant suffragists tried to coerce the politicians whom they were unable to convert, and for eight years (1906–1914) there raged a campaign of violence. Many sympathizers with the aims of the suffragists feared that these methods might weaken that respect for parliamentary authority without which the franchise itself is a barren gift.

Home Rule Bill Passed

The Irish problem reached a new phase and provoked another danger to the authority of parliament. Mr. Balfour's ministry had sought, with some success, to carry out a policy of appeasement in Ireland. Wyndham's generous Land Purchase Act (1903) had been based upon a hopeful agreement of conflicting parties and had encouraged its sponsor to coquet with the idea of "legislative devolution" as a compromise between the views of the Nationalists and of Ulster. Wyndham was, in consequence, suspected by the Ulster extremists, and in 1905 he had to resign. But the hopes of the Nationalists revived when a Liberal ministry came to power. In 1907 the Nationalists rejected a proposal for devolution in the form of Irish Councils. But after 1910 the ministry was dependent on Nationalist votes. In 1912 it introduced a Home Rule Bill which was carried in 1914 under the Parliament Act, though its operation was suspended owing to the outbreak of war. But Home Rule was bitterly opposed in Ulster, where a voluntary army of resistance was organized, which led in turn to the creation of an army of Nationalist volunteers. Opinion on the Irish problem is still divided, but there is little doubt that these threats,

* See Webb, "Trade Unionism," ed. 1920, pp. 604–608.

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of violence were damaging to parliamentary authority.

Progress in science and invention was marked during the later years of our period by a bewildering succession of wonders. During the 'eighties the telephone and the electric light had come into common use.

Electricity displaced the locomotives on the existing underground railways in London and elsewhere. Nor did electricity bring the only changes in transport. Successive improvements had scarcely transformed the bicycle from an amusing toy to an article of general utility when the pneumatic tyre and



THE COMING OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE: CHARING CROSS IN 1913

The illustration shows the transition stage from the horse-drawn to the motor-driven vehicle. As a point of interest, the change which came over London street traffic in some forty years is forcibly shown by comparing this illustration with that on page 2093.

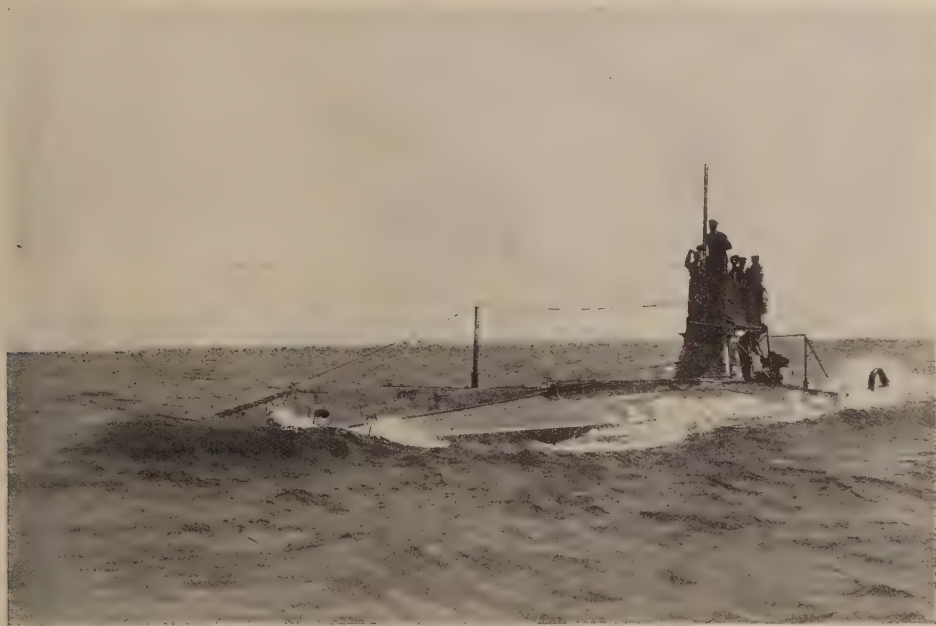
Electricity was applied to an increasing variety of purposes. Early in the new century electric trams appeared in urban centres and gradually linked up town to town. During the railway strike of 1911 people realized that by means of these tramway services it was possible to cross Lancashire and Yorkshire with scarcely a break, and the ingenious amused themselves by working out elaborate tramway itineraries. London, too, was gradually honeycombed with "tubes" for electric trains, and elec-

the petrol-driven engine made possible the modern motor-car. By 1914 the motor-cab had superseded the hansom; the picturesque horse-drawn omnibus had made way for the motor-bus; and the supremacy of the horse was being threatened in the transport of heavy goods by road. These changes came so swiftly that it has already been forgotten how recently they were hailed with astonishment.

In the early years of the century wireless telegraphy passed rapidly out of the ex-



An early type of aeroplane. The pilot is a famous pioneer of British aviation, the Hon. C. S. Rolls.



An early type of British submarine. This particular craft, A3, met with disaster.

TWO MECHANICAL TRIUMPHS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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perimental stage and could now be used to transmit messages over long distances. The submarine became an accepted element in naval warfare. By 1914 the aeroplane had been so far perfected that it could be used for purposes of war, though it was developed with increasing rapidity amid the stress of conflict. Nor were these the only mechanical improvements of the time. The machine-tool in its varied forms was coming into more extensive industrial use, and a thousand inventions increased the productive power of industry. Even in agriculture, though the British farmer was conservative, motor-driven machinery was increasingly employed to save labour in the cultivation of the land.

If scientific discoveries were being applied to industry and to the common purposes of life they were being utilized with no less assiduity in the practice of medicine. Preventive medicine, in its varied forms, almost transformed the conception of the doctor's task; it became his business not merely to cure disease but to root out its causes or to prevent their operation; and by utilizing such knowledge as that gained by Sir Ronald Ross's discovery of the transmission of malaria by the mosquito it became possible to make safe and healthy many regions which previously had been almost uninhabitable by white men.

Britain's "Splendid Isolation"

Occupied with these rapid changes and absorbed in domestic controversy the British people gave little continuous heed to foreign affairs. But their statesmen were often dismayed as they watched the nations of the earth increasing their armies, expanding their navies and piling up the materials of war. For twenty years after the Treaty of Berlin, British statesmen had, mainly under Salisbury's guidance, devoted their energies to the removal of differences which might have provoked international strife, and they had been foremost among the statesmen of the world in trying to substitute arbitration for war in the settlement of disputes between nations. But on the whole Britain had avoided continental entanglements. In consequence she found herself in a position of splendid but possibly dangerous isolation.

It seemed during the Boer War as if she had scarcely a friend in the world. In 1902 she suddenly emerged from her isolation and made an alliance with Japan, the young naval power of the East. It was followed in 1904 by the *entente* with France and Russia. The *entente* consisted, not in formal alliances, though Russia and France were already united in this way, but in the removal of outstanding differences between Britain and these two continental powers and in an understanding as to what was to be done in case the peace of the world were threatened and the safety of one or more of the three countries endangered.

The Grouping for War

Yet the effect of the *entente* was to range the great powers of Europe in hostile camps. This was not the intention of British statesmen, who had hoped, on the contrary, that the *entente* might be made the foundation of a wider understanding for the preservation of peace. But the powers of the Triple Alliance, Germany, Austria, and, in a position of greater detachment, Italy, confronted the powers of the *entente*, France and Russia in alliance and Great Britain in friendly understanding with them. Britain strove repeatedly but in vain to reach a similar understanding with Germany. But Europe was full of combustible material. In the unrestful Balkans the aims of Austria and Germany conflicted with those of Russia. In northern Africa the aims of Germany were at variance with the aims of France. Germany refused to believe in the sincerity of Britain's desire for a good understanding with her when they saw this country linked in friendship with France and Russia. In 1914 Austria made demands upon Serbia which brought Russia to Serbia's aid, and the conflict widened into European war. Germany supported Austria; France was loyal to Russia; and the conflict drew Britain to the side of France and Russia. On the 4th of August, 1914, Great Britain entered into a military struggle more formidable than any in her history.

She did not enter the struggle alone. The nations forming the great partnership of which she was the head made common



By permission of Lloyd's Register of Shipping.

THE CORONATION REVIEW (EDWARD VII) AT SPITHEAD (1902)

From the Painting by Signor de Martino.

UNITY OF THE EMPIRE

cause with her. In proportion as their autonomy had been recognized and developed, the colonies had been drawn more closely to Britain by ties of sentiment and loyalty. What supervision and control had never accomplished had been wrought by trust on the one hand and a developing sense of responsibility on the other. As good feeling increased Britain and the colonies began to devise means, effective though often informal, for mutual assistance in defence of common interests. If imperial federation seemed no nearer, consultations of the imperial partners became more frequent. They began with informal discussions between the statesmen gathered together to celebrate Queen Victoria's jubilees, but a more formal colonial conference was summoned in 1907, at which it was decided to renew such meetings every

four years, and these consultations were fruitful of good understanding and mutual helpfulness. They led, especially, to the formulation of a common policy of defence in which the colonies took a share of the burden, determined by themselves, but contributory to the larger whole. Since the colonies assumed in this way a voluntary share in imperial responsibilities they could not well be excluded from a knowledge of imperial obligations. After 1911, therefore, their statesmen were taken into the confidence of those who directed the conduct of foreign affairs. When the storms of war broke over Great Britain in 1914 the colonies were both ready and willing to make her cause their own. The whole vast partnership of peoples linked together under the British crown was of one mind and purpose, though it was united by no formal bond.



SEAL OF GEORGE V

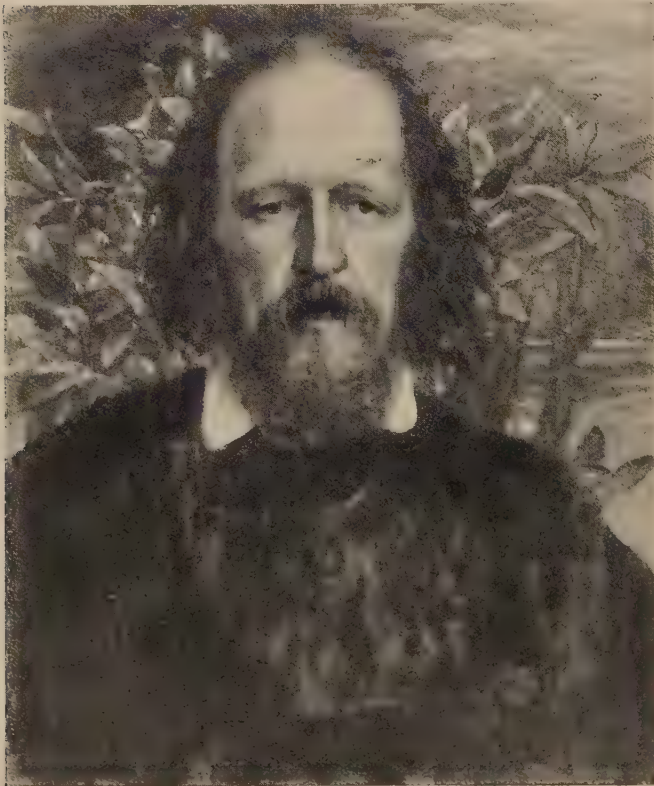
CHAPTER XXVI

LITERATURE AND PAINTING IN THE VICTORIAN ERA

THE Victorian era as a definite phase in thought and literature, art and life, is no more coincident in date with the reign of Queen Victoria than the Elizabethan age was with the reign of Elizabeth. It may be taken to begin somewhere in the 'thirties, when Tennyson was publishing the earliest of his poems that are comparable with his best, when Browning published *Pauline*, and Carlyle inaugurated

that series of works, beginning with *Sartor Resartus* and his *French Revolution*, into which he poured the whole of his individuality. And we may regard it as ending somewhere in the 'eighties, when Tennyson had written almost everything of his that stands immortal, when Browning, Matthew Arnold, Rossetti, George Eliot, and Carlyle passed away, and the two great masters of the Victorian novel, Dickens and Thackeray, had been long in their graves. The period is more or less identified with the career of Tennyson, not only because his name is prominent in the historical record, but because he was identified with the mental and moral life of the nation in a manner that has no parallel in the lives of earlier British poets.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-92), the son of a Lincolnshire rector, was educated at Louth. He went to Cambridge in 1828, and was there with his friend Arthur Hallam, son of the historian, with Thackeray, Edward FitzGerald (afterwards translator of *Omar Khayyám*) and Monckton Milnes. The year before, he and Frederick Tennyson had published a small volume, *Poems by Two Brothers*, which is chiefly of interest retrospectively for its lack of promise. In the very unequal col-



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

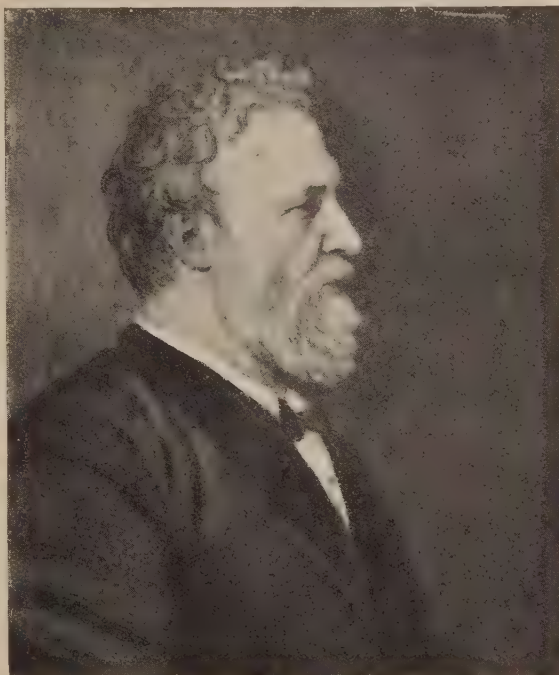
TENNYSON'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE

lection of poems that he issued in 1830 there were, however, several pieces of higher note, for this contained *The Ode to Memory*, *Mariana at the Moated Grange*, *Oriana*, and *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*. Much less of the affectation and the immaturity of diction afterwards to be removed by Tennyson coloured his next volume, which contained such well-known triumphs of his maturing art as *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Palace of Art*, and *The Lotos Eaters*.

The year of this volume, 1833, was a year of sudden and deep-reaching sorrow to the poet, his friend Hallam dying suddenly. Hitherto his work had shown the artist playing irresponsibly with beautiful dreams. Henceforward, though he never wavered in his devotion to beauty, and his art grew more and more sure and accomplished for some twenty-five years, there is a profound change in the relation of his art to life. In *Memoriam*, his beautiful series of elegies on Arthur Hallam, was not published till 1850. But he had long been writing it; and in the two volumes of poems issued in 1842, and even in his fanciful medley, *The Princess*, 1847, his first long narrative-poem, his attitude to life is altogether more serious, touched with grief and pathos and troubled by the thoughts and questionings on the meaning of existence which were a general characteristic of contemporary literature.

In 1850, on the death of Wordsworth, he was made poet laureate. This was the year of *In Memoriam*, in which, pre-eminently, he voiced the ideas and speculations of his time on science, progress, and faith. Five quatrains may be quoted, not as examples of the thoughts on evolution and its possible consequences to theology, which were then somewhat daring but now sound obsolete, and are blemishes on a work of such art, but as a summary expression of his faith in the midst of doubt—if of a faith hesitant and insecure.

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;
"That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;



ROBERT BROWNING

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A. (1875), in the National Portrait Gallery.

"That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.
"Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.
"So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry."

Maud, a kind of novel in verse, appeared in 1855, and contained two of the happiest of Tennyson's many finely wrought lyrics. In 1859 he published the first four of his

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Idylls of the King, ultimately extended to ten, a suite of episodes from Arthurian legend. There had been no such sustained blank verse



MATTHEW ARNOLD

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

since Milton, but it was blank verse of a very different manner and cadence from Milton's. As examples of artistic story-telling these poems are almost perfect; but in certain of the higher qualities of poetry they are very unequal, and distinctly inferior to the magnificent *Morte d'Arthur*, written much earlier, which he eventually incorporated in the great epilogue, *The Passing of Arthur*. Tennyson got his material from Malory and Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*, sources that did not always give the best of the mediæval versions of the stories. Further, in his character-drawing and in the interplay of character, he introduced into the poem the ethical ideals of the mid-Victorian age, and even gave it more than a suggestion of didacticism. The result is that, in spite of its many and great beauties, the work is by no means so true a rendering of the matter of Arthur or of the mediæval spirit that evolved it as William Morris's *Defence of Guenevere*. The *Idylls* were a popular success, and the next book, *Enoch Arden* (1864), another novel in verse, heavily adorned with Tenny-

son's elaboration of style, is stated to have sold to the extent of seventeen thousand copies on the day it was published. Small green volumes now appeared with almost periodic regularity down to his death, the most important being those giving the remainder of the *Idylls*, *Locksley Hall*, *Sixty Years After*, a sequel to one of his most effective expressions of the age's hopes and fears, and *Ballads and other Poems*, issued in 1880. His plays were interesting, but undoubtedly a deviation from his proper work. In 1892, two years after he had written *Crossing the Bar*, Tennyson died.

Robert Browning (1812-89), born at Camberwell and educated at Peckham, was carefully prepared for a literary career. Tennyson's learning was wide and became an integral part of his style; Browning's was enormous, and whilst it was largely responsible for the crabbed obscurity of his language, it gave him an inexhaustible fund of human character and experience to draw upon in his semi-dramatic poems. He published *Pauline* in 1833, and *Paracelsus* in



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

From the Drawing by F. Talford (1859), in the National Portrait Gallery.

BROWNING'S LYRICS

1835, both poems dramatic in principle, like the vast majority of his works; the latter, though also dramatic in form, is quite unsuitable for the stage. Paracelsus himself, the great alchemist and mystic, is the leader among the four interlocutors in this psychological piece, in which the blank verse, pregnant with half-expressed meanings, is a contrast to the beauty of the lyrics.

In *Strafford* (1837) Browning tried to write a play that could be performed on the stage. Then came *Sordello* (1840), another psychological study, and of an obscurity that evoked much theory and discussion. The next eight pieces (1841-6) were entitled collectively *Bells and Pomegranates*, and comprised such well-known poems as *Pippa Passes*, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, and *Luria*. Especially charming is *Pippa Passes*, setting forth how the simple innocence of a little peasant girl unwittingly exerts profound influence on the hearts and lives of others.

In 1846 Browning married Elizabeth Barrett, and till her death in 1861 he lived



CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

From a Crayon Drawing by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

chiefly in Italy. Two of his best works appeared during that time, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, in 1850, and *Men and Women*, in 1855. Returning to England, he published *Dramatis Personæ* in 1864. The last-named two books contain perhaps the very best of Browning—his romance, his wealth of thought and character, and his wonderful command of the dramatic lyric. The four volumes of *The Ring and the Book* appeared in 1868-9, and from then to his death he continued to issue volumes of miscellaneous character and quality every two or three years. *Asolando*, which was posthumous, contains some admirable lyrics.

With Browning the content was more important than the form; his strong personality, his insight, his energy, and his



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

From the Drawing by himself, in the National Portrait Gallery.

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learning gave intellectual weight to everything he wrote, and enabled him to dramatize and anatomize an immense crowd of human individualities. He has been decried for obscurity in poems that are not obscure, and as a matter of fact he is usually as straightforward and easy to read as in his *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *The Last Ride Together*, or even *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, which are never criticized for obscurity. Often, too, he attains the magic and felicity of phrase of great poetry, though it must be admitted that he was careless of such an object so long as he expressed himself to his own satisfaction.

His wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), attained popularity as a poet much sooner. She had written *The Seraphim* (1838) and two volumes of *Poems* (1844) before she married Browning. On this last volume and the *Poems* published in 1850, on her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, written in 1847-50, and her Italian poem *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851) rests her claim to be regarded as the second great English woman poet after Christina Rossetti. She herself would probably have laid more stress on the long and elaborate *Aurora Leigh* (1857), a sort of sociological novel, containing much autobiography and a frank expression of personal views, and in parts rich in poetry. Mrs. Browning was utterly uncritical, and her lapses of taste are more blemishing and notorious than those of Keats. In the strangely-titled *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, inspired by her love for Browning, carelessness of form was restrained by the rigidity of the framework, and her lyric gift and intensity of feeling are seen at their best.

Poetry of Matthew Arnold

Matthew Arnold (1822-88), a poet whose total output of verse, partly by the accidents of circumstance, was relatively small, wrote a large quantity of excellent criticism which will call for mention later. The eldest son of Dr. Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, and a scholar of Balliol and fellow of Oriel, he published a small volume, *The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems*, anonymously in 1849. Arnold employed, with many new effects, the irregular unrhymed verse that had proved a snare to many previous

writers. For a time a master at Rugby, in 1851 he was appointed an inspector of schools, remaining throughout his life ardently interested in educational systems at home and on the continent. (It must be admitted that, apart from his studies and official reports on educational matters, there is a good deal of the schoolmaster in Arnold's writings on social subjects.) Unfortunately these avocations tended to take him away from poetry, and eventually reduced his muse almost to silence. What remains, moreover, is not of even worth. The best is in two series of poems issued in 1853 and 1855, and in the *New Poems* of 1867. The longer narrative-poems, *Sohrab and Rustum* (1853), *Balder Dead* (1855), and *Tristram and Iseult* (1852), are inferior to his short pieces. He himself was dissatisfied with the dramatic poem *Empedocles on Etna* (1852), though it enshrines some of his noblest lyrical pieces; and *Merope* (1858), an attempt at a lyrical drama on the classical model, is cold and lifeless.

Arnold's Style and Methods

Arnold nevertheless stands next in rank among his contemporaries to Tennyson and Browning. It was his tenet that literature should be a criticism of life, and this all his poetical work unquestionably is. In the finish and sober dignity of his style he moulded himself on the Greek poets and on Virgil. His spiritual masters were Virgil and Wordsworth. In *Sohrab and Rustum* and in *Balder Dead* one sees him sedulously cultivating the Homeric simile and Homeric turns of expression. Yet the things that charm are not these, but such passages as the solemn and beautiful close of the former poem, the picture of the Oxus moving "through the hush'd Chorasmian waste, under the solitary moon"—

"till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed
stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral sea."

He used the rhymeless rhythmic verse of *The Strayed Reveller* in his moving elegiac verses on Heine, his father, and the Brontë sisters. The impressive *Memorial Verses* on

PRE-RAPHAELITE INFLUENCE IN POETRY

Wordsworth are rhymed, and he occasionally combined rhyme with his irregular metres. On the other hand, he wrote some impeccable sonnets, and handled stanzas of complex structure, as in his two monodies *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar-Gipsy*, with brilliant mastery. The metrical skill shown in *The Forsaken Merman* is not less conspicuous than the pathetic beauty of that well-known piece.

Arnold's friend, the poet Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61), object of his grief in *Thyrsis*, is further associated with the younger poet as another exponent both of Wordsworthian influences and of the trouble of regret into which so many intellectuals were plunged by the weakening of their religious faith. His life was short (1819-61), and given to other things than literature. But there were the makings of a poet in Clough. He wrote several lyrics of exquisite beauty, and his long poem in rough-and-ready hexameters, *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848), his account of a holiday in the Highlands, with disquisitions on the social problem and many other subjects, contains passages of ravishing beauty and natural magic. The use of classical metres in English may be debated; at any rate no one has used the elegiac combination with more musical results than Clough in his *Amours de Voyage*.

Whether Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) was greater as a painter or as a poet is a question that would be difficult to answer; but it is not quite fanciful to discern the poet in the romance and magic of his pictures; or in his poetry—for instance, the pictorial sonorous phrases glowing with sensuous symbolism—to find the peculiar genius of the splendid colourist. Long before he was known even to a limited world as anything more than a painter and the founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Rossetti was writing poetry. Like Morris, he contributed to *The Germ* and to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, organs of the Pre-Raphaelites, and his translations of *The Early Italian Poets*, afterwards called *Dante and his Circle*, were published in 1861. But the poems which he was on the point of publishing were withheld when the wife he had romantically loved died in 1862. In the madness of his grief he buried the MS. in her

coffin, whence it was not recovered and given to the world till 1870. This volume of poems was supplemented in 1881 by *Ballads and Sonnets*, and next year Rossetti was dead.

In the Pre-Raphaelites many influences met and coalesced, the spirit of the Middle Ages dominating all. In Rossetti the peculiar characteristics colouring his art either as painter or as poet were drawn from his compatriots, the old Italian masters. He



WILLIAM MORRIS

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

seems to be painting a picture, a mediæval altar-piece, as he tells in *The Germ* how—

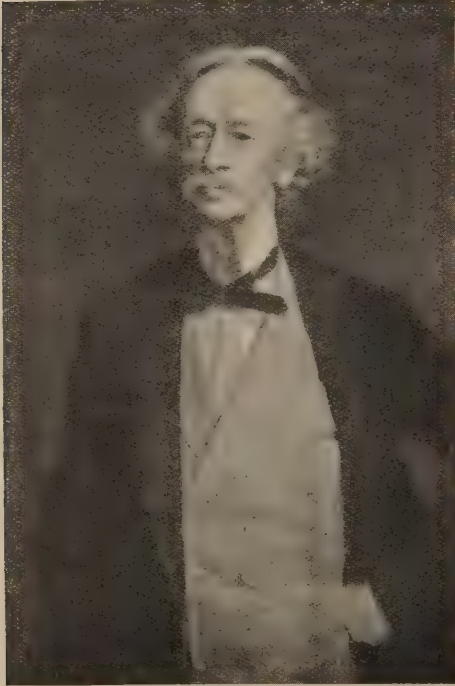
“The blessed Damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her blue grave eyes were deeper much
Than a deep water, even.
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

“Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
On the neck meetly worn;
And her hair, lying along her back,
Was yellow like ripe corn.

“Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.”

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

In *The White Ship*, *The King's Tragedy*, *Rose Mary*, and other long narratives, the same ballad music and pictorial magic are found, and there were other poems of quite a different character and form, notably his sonnets. Rossetti is the greatest modern master of the sonnet according to the strict Petrarchan canon, and the sequence en-



COVENTRY PATMORE

From the Painting by J. S. Sargent, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

titled *The House of Life*, enunciating his mystical conception of sensuous love, with tragic intensity of passion and with a rushing splendour of diction, is unmatched in its class. The concluding sestet of *Lovesight*—the whole sonnet might be quoted—is a superb example of his art as a sonneteer—

“O love, my love ! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening
slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing ?”

His sister Christina Rossetti (1830–94), was

also a contributor to *The Germ*, under the pseudonym of Ellen Alleyne. Her *Goblin Market* (1862), a tale of magic of an original and fascinating kind, had actually been preceded by various compositions privately printed, the earliest, *To my Mother on the Anniversary of her Birth*, being produced at the age of twelve. Christina Rossetti resembled her brother both in genius and technique, for they had the same teachers. They resembled each other, too, in the spirit of their poetry, and the intense religious devotion of Christina is matched by Dante Rossetti's exaltation of passion into a mystic worship with the duties and ritual of religious service. Christina, after her early excursion along the borders of humanity and fairyland, came back to her one deep interest, the life of the spirit. If *The Prince's Progress* (1866) is less fantastic than *Goblin Market*, it has a similar motive and the ethical meaning in both is the same. Her finest quality, however, is seen in her innumerable lyrics, sonnets, and miscellaneous pieces, in which she often approached Swinburne, on the one hand, and, on the other, Blake.

Another illustrious member of the Pre-Raphaelite group, which included Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844–91), Philip Bourke Marston (1850–87), John Addington Symonds (1840–93), and other poets, besides prose-writers of distinction, was William Morris (1834–96), poet, romancer, Socialist, and craftsman.

To write a full account of the work of Morris would be to give a history of the chief intellectual, artistic, and sociological currents of thought in the second half of the nineteenth century. His life and his contribution to life were as significant and important as Ruskin's. Morris recaptured the mediæval outlook, temper, and manner more surely than any of his colleagues in the movement, and succeeded repeatedly in doing that rare thing—tell a classical or Norse or old German story in the same mediæval way as Benoît de Ste. Maure or Guido de Colonna might have told it in the twelfth century. This he did with the Arthurian matter in *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), with the legend of the Golden Fleece and the tragic

SOME MINOR POETS

story of Medea in *Jason* (1866), with the Volsunga myth in his epic, *Sigurd the Volsung* (1877), and with a number of tales, myths, and traditions in the three volumes of *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70). In these and in *Love is Enough* (1872) the influence of Keats, the author of *Lamia* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, is very apparent. For that matter, Keats was the most predominant modern influence on the whole poetic development of Tennyson, Rossetti, and Swinburne, not to mention a large number of minor poets. Morris also used the mediæval method successfully in a series of prose stories, comprising *The Dream of John Ball* (1888), *The House of the Wolfings* (1889), and its sequel, *The Roots of the Mountains* (1890), *The Story of the Glittering Plain* (1890), *The Well at the World's End* (1896), *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (1897), and *The Sundering Flood* (1897). *The Dream of John Ball* is an historical study which is also a tract, and in *News from Nowhere* (1891) Morris projected his vision of a socialistic commonwealth into a picturesque Utopian romance.

A considerable body of poetry of no mean quality was written throughout this period by men whose names only can be afforded mention; among them two accomplished producers of society verse, Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-39) and Frederick Locker-Lampson (1821-95), and a third, their near kinsman Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866), much of whose most charming occasional poetry will be found scattered about the pages of his novels. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton (1805-85), Gordon Hake (1809-95), Lord Lytton (1834-91), William Edmondstone Aytoun (1813-65), author of the *Bon Gaultier Ballads* and of *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*, the "Spasmodic" poets

Sydney Dobell (1824-74), Alexander Smith (1829-66), and "Festus" Bailey (1816-1902) may all be classed as minor. So too, perhaps, should Coventry Patmore (1823-96) be classed, fine though his utterance of devotional and conjugal emotion undoubtedly is.

It would be a concession to the prejudice



CHARLES DICKENS

From the Painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

against dialect to dismiss the Dorsetshire poet William Barnes (1801-86) as merely one of the crowd. He is the idyllist of English poetry, and, like Theocritus, wrote in a rustic medium because the open vowels and softened consonants were most musically adapted to his themes. The difficulties of reading his poetry are ridiculously exaggerated. Barnes published his first rustic poems in 1844 and collected his three series in 1879. A convenient selection has been edited by Thomas Hardy. There is no need to speak

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

here of the philological and mathematical works of William Barnes.

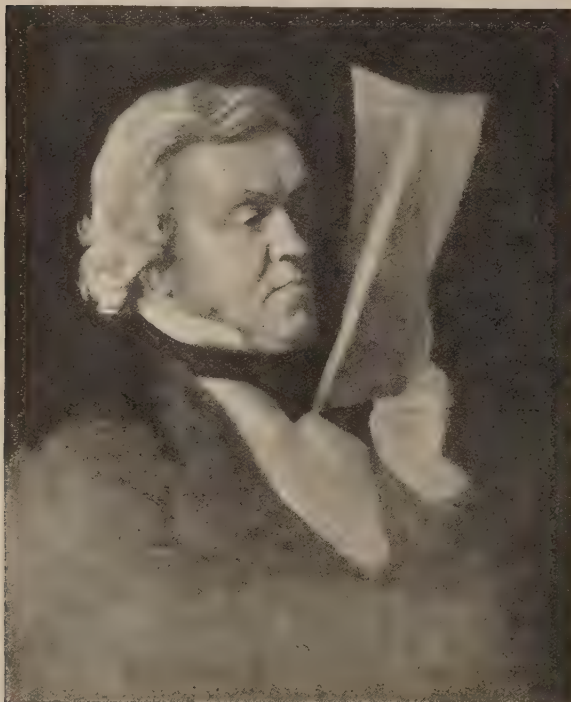
After Jane Austen and Scott, the development of the novel proceeded on two distinct lines, one represented by Dickens, the other by Thackeray. Dickens, in spite of the picturesque realism with which he paints the life of the lower classes, was primarily a

that revealed an unequalled knowledge of the London poor and lower middle-classes. His first work of unmistakable genius was the *Pickwick Papers* (1837), in which he used the same sort of material in a more fanciful and deliberately comic way, and drew the immortal lineaments of Mr. Pickwick, the two Wellers, and a host of others, whom, by the

grace of Dickens and his illustrators, we know as familiarly as we know the leading statesmen of the day. *Oliver Twist* (1838) was a more serious study of the poor and the criminal classes, and gave us, side by side with Bill Sikes and the Jew Fagin, the portraits of Mr. Bumble, the Artful Dodger, and Charlie Bates. *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) introduced us to those strange people, the Mantalins, the Squeers family, the Cheerybles, and Mr. Vincent Crummles; and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) gave us friends for life in Dick Swiveller, the Marchioness, Codlin and Short, and Kit Nubbles. It also drew the gruesome figure of Quilp, and elaborated the "touchingness" of Little Nell and her grandfather in a manner, dear to Dickens, which is now happily not regarded as a lofty flight of imaginative art.

After this he wrote two masterpieces in the vein of *Nicholas Nickleby*—to wit, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844), in which Mr. Pecksniff and Sairey Gamp and Mark Tapley

are the most illustrious in a large group of unforgettable creations; and *David Copperfield* (1850), in some sense an autobiographical novel. In the latter we find Mr. Micawber, Mr. Dick, Miss Trotwood, the Peggottys, Tommy Traddles, and the sanctimonious Uriah Heep. *Dombey and Son* (1846), *Bleak House* (1853), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) fall short in quality but are of like kind. In *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) Dickens applied the same creative imagination to the reconstruction of an historical episode, the "No Popery" Riots of 1778, and in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) wrote a striking melodrama on the



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

From the Painting by Samuel Laurence, in the National Portrait Gallery.

creator. His Quilp, Mrs. Gamp, the Wellers—father and son, Mr. Micawber, and scores of similarly grotesque beings, are the offspring of a poetic imagination rather than figures taken from life. Thackeray, on the contrary, pursued the methods of Fielding, analysing and interpreting real life from an intellectual standpoint, with comedy and satire not less diverting than the humour of Dickens.

Charles Dickens (1812–70) opened his long series of novels and tales with *Sketches by Boz* (1836–7), a collection of humorous anecdotes, caricatures, and extravaganzas



"GEORGE ELIOT" (MARY ANN CROSS)

From a Drawing by Sir F. W. Burton, in the National Portrait Gallery.



ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

From a Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.



CHARLOTTE BRONTË

From a Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.



EMILY JANE BRONTË

From the Painting by P. Branwell Brontë, in the National Portrait Gallery.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Reign of Terror. His *Christmas Books* consisted of some singular fantasies on humanitarian themes. *Hard Times* (1854) was a Carlylean pamphlet-novel, attacking the heartless utilitarianism and industrial economics of Gradgrind and Bounderby of Coketown. The unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) has furnished a grim puzzle to a succession of critics, eager to show how Dickens would or should have resolved the plot. *Great Expectations* (1861) reveals a mastery of structure absent from his earlier work, and must always rank as one of the greatest of the novels of Charles Dickens.

Thackeray as Novelist

His contemporary, William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–63), belongs to the tradition of the eighteenth century rather than of the nineteenth. Dickens represents the full development of the vast interest in human nature in all its infinite diversity, which was the sole and sufficient basis for the novel as written by Scott, as distinct from Scott's romance. Thackeray is another Fielding, an apostle of common sense and a scoffer at romance and melodrama, a critical expounder of life and character, with a captious eye for their foibles. He had more than a bit of Dickens's sentimentalism, and was by no means so hard-headed in his intellectual grasp and consistency as Fielding; but he surpassed even his avowed master in his life-like drawing.

Various parodies and extremely personal satires, and a series of humorous sketches and mock-heroic tales, preceded Thackeray's first full-length novel, *Vanity Fair* (1848). This was a comprehensive painting of society as he saw it, permeated with vice and meanness and hypocrisy. Among the multitude of its characters the good people, typified by Captain Dobbin and Amelia, cut a poor figure; and the bad, summed up in the adventuress Becky Sharp, have at any rate the more interesting time. *The Book of Snobs* (1848) is a collection of sketches from *Punch*, and *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* a sort of miniature *Vanity Fair*. *Pendennis*, the next big novel (1849–50), was written as a pendant to Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and presents the young man of the times without

any mitigation of his vanity, self-indulgence, and weakness. Along with memorable characters such as the Irish Captain Costigan and the gushing Miss Amory, it contains the manly but unassuming Harry Foker and the old buck Major Pendennis, perhaps the best-drawn of all Thackeray's characters.

Thackeray's Historical Novels

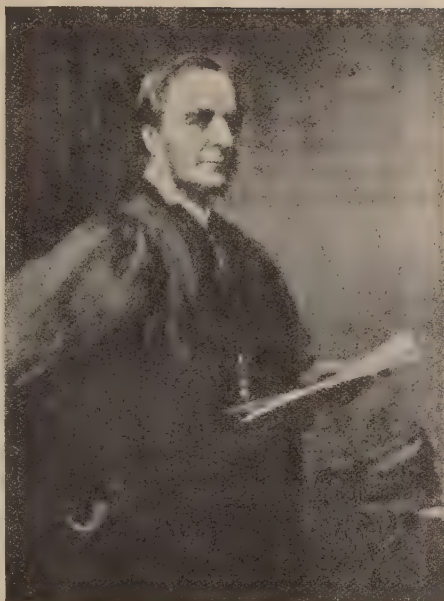
In *Esmond* (1852) Thackeray went back for his subject and scenery to the early eighteenth century, the century that he knew so well and where his own sympathies lay. As an historical novel—not a romance but essentially a novel,—this is unsurpassed. Here there were none of the accepted trappings of the historical muse, but realism as faithful as immense study and familiar insight could make it. Idealism is again at a discount; and the history of the magnificent Beatrix, completed in the sequel, *The Virginians* (1858–9), is terrible in its uncompromising truth to the weakness of human nature. Yet there are figures of great nobility here, and some scenes that have a beauty beyond romance. *The Newcomes* (1854–5) came back to the contemporary world again, and drew with a pitiless hand the false, the hypocritical, the self-centred, the worldly. At the same time it drew Colonel Newcome, overdrew him perhaps, but at all events gave a lifelike portrayal of a true and chivalrous English gentleman. Emulating Fielding, Thackeray in his first story, *Barry Lyndon* (1844), exposed the hollowness of greatness divorced from goodness in an ironical autobiography of a clever adventurer. The time chosen was the middle of the preceding century, which was also that of his unfinished *Denis Duval*. Of his other tales and miscellanies there is no room to speak, except to say that they showed the same graceful and urbane style, excellent humour, and the same constant tendency to preach. This tendency has been too much reprobated in Thackeray, though it may be admitted that he did not philosophize with the perfect artistry that was natural to Fielding.

The novels of Charlotte Brontë (1816–55) and her sister Emily Brontë (1818–48)—the latter a poet of distinction—are of no small interest in the growth of modern

WOMEN NOVELISTS

fiction. *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1853) are each to a large extent composed of personal reminiscences of people and of intimately personal experiences of life and emotion. Charlotte had been in love with the married principal of a school at Brussels, and the love stories of Jane and Mr. Rochester, of Lucy and Paul Emanuel, and the still more candid story in *The Professor* (1846) are disguised versions of this intense affair of the heart. There was something quite new in the frankness and power with which both Charlotte and Emily Brontë expressed woman's capacity for passionate love and her yearnings for greater freedom and space for self-realization. Though there was plenty of interesting realism in these novels, the major characters were creatures of a higher mould than average man, and in Emily Brontë's one novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the greatness of the theme almost breaks the bonds of prose.

The next two novelists to be considered are also women. Mrs. Gaskell (1810-65) must be summarily referred to as the precursor of George Eliot (1819-80), the philo-



CHARLES KINGSLEY

From the Painting by Louisa Dickinson, in Magdalene College, Cambridge.

sophic analyst of life, the psychologist of sin and the internal process of retribution, and at the same time the humorist who employs humour for its own sake and not as an instrument of satire. George Eliot, who was born Mary Ann Evans, began to write novels in middle-age after a life immersed in religious and philosophic criticism. At first the didactic propensities inevitably due to such a training were kept subject to some restraint. It is true that her *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857) were definitely planned as an interpretation of reality in the light of spiritual ideals; but the deeper meaning was, with instinctive art, never expressed as an abstract thesis but left latent in the story. *Adam Bede* (1859) sets out a deeper problem of temptation, crime, and expiation on the broader canvas of a novel portraying country life a century ago. In the philosopher of the farmyard, Mrs. Poyser, in this novel, and in numerous rustic and domestic characters in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), in that charming idyll, *Silas Marner* (1861), and in the complex novel of deserted ideals, *Middlemarch* (1871-2), George Eliot poured



EDWARD GEORGE BULWER-LYTTON

From the Painting by H. W. Pickersgill, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

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out her rich and charming humour. *Romola* (1863) is the sternest of her studies in the causation of moral decadence, and a learned and laboured panorama of Florence in the days of Savonarola.

All through this opulent time there were novelists writing abundantly who would have made the fortune of most other periods. The

afterwards Lord Beaconsfield (1804–81), did initiate a genre, the novel of high politics, in *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), and *Lothair* (1870). Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866) again stands quite alone, with his genial satires of intellectual, literary, and political absurdities.

At the middle of the century, Charles Kingsley, a Church of England clergyman (1819–75), wrote some startling fiction opening up the social problem and, stimulated by the Crimean war-fever, produced several historical romances, notably *Westward Ho!* (1855). His brother Henry Kingsley (1830–76), author of *Ravenshoe* (1861), was the better novelist. One of the finest historical novels of all time was *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861), by Charles Reade (1814–84), the best of many industriously documented studies of the present or the past. Then there were the Irish novelists, William Carleton (1798–1869), John Banim (1798–1842), Gerald Griffin (1803–40), and Samuel Lover (1797–1868); and for want of any other niche to put him in, that magnificent vagabond and prose-poet of the open air, George Borrow (1803–81), author of *Lavengro* (1851) and *The Romany Rye* (1857), must be mentioned among the novel-writers.

In history, political and social philosophy, criticism of both literature and the plastic arts, in theology and metaphysics, and in science, the Victorian age was fertile in eminent writers. Henry Hallam (1777–1859) was a painstaking if not profound historian, and a careful writer, though not of commanding importance as a man of letters. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59), within his limits a great historian, has the fame of a brilliant writer. His *Essays* are familiar reading, and his *History of England*, in the main a history of the Whig Revolution of 1688–9, abounds in vigorous portraiture. Macaulay's pointed, antithetical style was for the rest of the century a pattern to second-rate writers, and its influence on English prose in general was considerable.



THOMAS CARLYLE

From the Painting by J. McNeill Whistler, in the Glasgow Art Gallery, by permission of the Corporation of Glasgow.

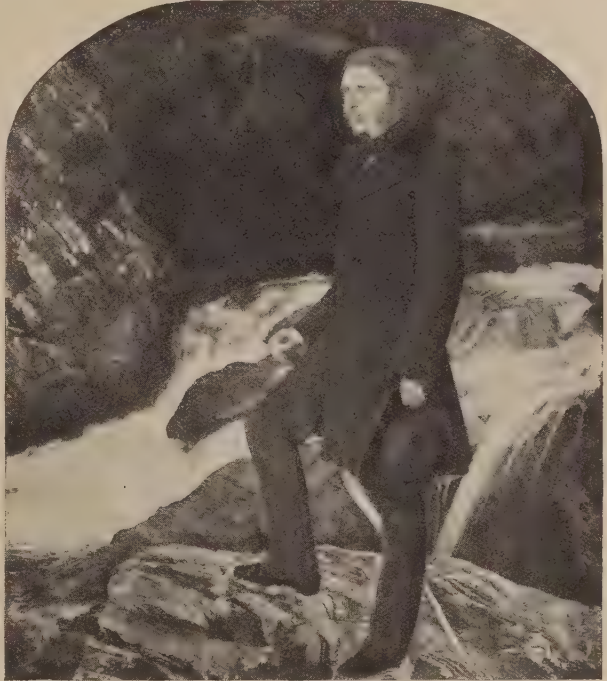
varied output of Charles Lever (1806–72) ranged from the rollicking humours of *Harry Lorrequer* (1839) and *Charles O'Malley* (1841) to the more serious Irish novel, *Lord Kilgobbin* (1872). The sea stories of Captain Marryat (1792–1848) are prolific in humorous character, though Michael Scott's surpassed them in descriptive vigour and romance. The novels of Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–73), who became Lord Lytton (1866), were the most varied and perhaps the most considerable in bulk (unless they were exceeded by Trollope's) of any one man's novels; but they initiated no new genre and are of no historical importance. Benjamin Disraeli,

CARLYLE AND RUSKIN

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was an historian of a different stamp. If he was something less he was also a great deal more than the regular historian. After some years of hackwork, in which he wrote critical and miscellaneous essays, memoirs, and other works that gave scanty scope for originality, he made himself famous and at the same time secured a right to reveal his intensely individual genius by his magnificent *French Revolution* (1837), at once a dramatic reconstruction of that furious episode in human affairs and an enunciation of the author's philosophy of human history. It was preceded by *Sartor Resartus* (1834). In this strange, cryptic book Carlyle, in the whimsical style of a self-appointed prophet, with passages of fantastic symbolism and semi-poetical eloquence, set forth his "Philosophy of Clothes," and the faith in man, God, and the universe which had come to him after a period of doubt and conflict. *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841) taught the same gospel, and *Chartism* (1839) and *Past and Present* (1843) dealt with social questions from a like point of view. Between this and the strenuous prophecies of *Latter-day Pamphlets* (1850) Carlyle was at work on the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845), a monument of industry. On Cromwell he concentrated all his sympathies and his genius, and a similar concentration was given less successfully to *Frederick the Great*, which occupied him exclusively from 1851 to 1865. Carlyle's numerous essays and articles, appearing in successive editions of his collected works, which in 1871–4 numbered thirty-seven volumes, exhibit an amazing range of acquirements and interests, and, read chronologically, give the history of his mind and style. This style underwent a complete transformation from first to last

and is utterly unlike any other. At its best it surpasses everything in dramatic splendour and energy and moving eloquence, though it departs widely from the norm of classical English, and is an impossible model for imitation.

John Ruskin (1819–1900) was another master of an individual style, and in his rôles



JOHN RUSKIN

From the Painting by Sir John Everett Millais, P.R.A., in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

of art-critic, moralist, and social reformer, as miscellaneous as Carlyle. He published the first volume of his *Modern Painters* in 1843, the fifth not appearing till 1860. This book effected a revolution in artistic criticism, inculcating a higher appreciation of Turner and the great Venetian painters, and dethroning certain artists from their accepted supremacy. *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *Stones of Venice* (1851–3) powerfully aided the Gothic revival in architecture, and taught that the basis of good craftsmanship was a sound social system. In books and pamphlets, lectures, and the

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

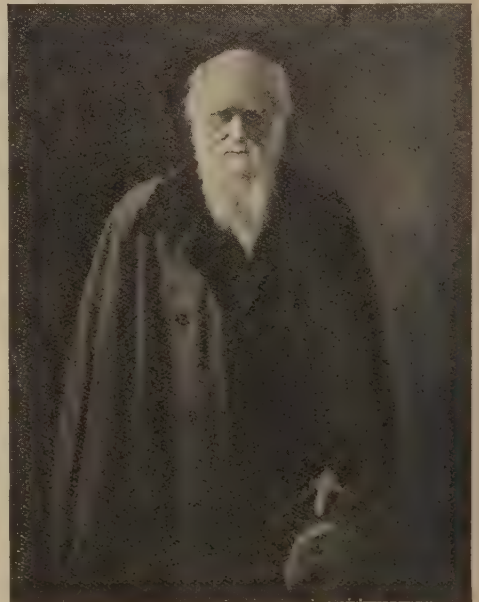
From the Painting by the Hon. John Collier, in the National Portrait Gallery.

newspaper, Ruskin continued to wage war on behalf of sincerity and humility in art, a purified social and industrial structure, and a system of national education. He was a doughty champion of the Pre-Raphaelites, and inspired William Morris in both art and economics. Ruskin's social and economic faith is expressed in *Unto this Last* (1860), one of the most influential books he ever wrote. In it he denounced the mechanical and unhumanized political economy that had been the offspring of utilitarianism. Ruskin has proved a greater force as a teacher and a social reformer than as an expounder of aesthetics, where he was never very clear-headed. He developed the sensuous, rhythmic, elevated prose that De Quincey and Landor had elaborated in different directions, and in the descriptive passages of *Modern Painters* sometimes attained the thrilling effect of one of Turner's pictures on the reader's imagination.

In any estimate of the literature of the century the prose of Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-90), theologian, historian, and essayist, must receive a high place. James Anthony Froude (1818-94) ranks higher as

a writer than as an historian, at least if measured by the same canons as the dry but industrious Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-92), with whom it is natural to compare him. Among scientific writers, Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-95) stands out as a master of pure English and an able controversialist, while the clear and adequate style of Charles Darwin (1809-82) is worthy of his intellectual eminence. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) hardly calls for notice as a writer, but the strong, terse English of William Cobbett (1762-1835), the lucid style of John Stuart Mill (1806-73), and the work of the philosopher Sir William Rowan Hamilton (1788-1856), of the jurists John Austin (1790-1859), James Fitzjames Stephen (1829-94), and Sir Henry Maine (1822-88), of the historians Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868), Bishop Thirlwall (1797-1875), George Grote (1794-1871), and Sir William Napier (1785-1860), cannot be passed over.

Still less can the critics be ignored. The reviews and magazines established at the beginning of the century prospered throughout this period, and others were added to



CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN

From the Painting by the Hon. John Collier, in the National Portrait Gallery.



THE HAY-WAIN

From the Painting by John Constable, R.A., in the National Gallery.



THE "FIGHTING TÉMÉRAIRE" TUGGED TO LAST BERTH TO BE BROKEN UP

From the Painting by J. M. W. Turner, R.A., in the National Gallery.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

them. Macaulay, Carlyle, and Ruskin must be counted among the leading critics of literature and art; Newman and Mill have left important essays on literary theory. The only one, however, to be put in competition with Coleridge and Hazlitt is Matthew Arnold, whose little book *On Translating Homer* (1862), the fruit of lectures he gave as professor of poetry at Oxford, is a liberal education in the right way to appreciate poetry. He brought forward an eloquent plea *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), and published two series of *Essays in Criticism* (1865-88), which contain appreciations not surpassed in insight and persuasion by Sainte-Beuve. Arnold's *Discourses in America* (1885), his rather superficial *God and the Bible* (1875) and *Literature and Dogma* (1873), his preaching of "sweetness and light" in the witty *Culture and Anarchy* (1867) and the ironical *Friendship's Garland* (1871), are all important as criticism though their object is mainly outside the realm of literature.

Notable Painters

The landscape painter, John Constable (1776-1837), was not only poorly understood and appreciated in his own time but scoffed at for qualities that since his death have made him one of the leading masters of Europe. The vivid truth of his open-air painting of homely Suffolk scenery is well exemplified in "The Hay-Wain," reproduced on p. 2239, and in many canvases hanging in our national collections; and it is a commonplace to say that he was the pioneer followed by Corot, Millet, and other painters of the Barbizon school.

The greatest of English landscape painters, J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), also carries us back to pre-Victorian times. By the close of the preceding century Turner had brought water-colour to an excellence hitherto unknown. From that time to 1820 is the period of his first style, when he was imitating various masters, Wilson, Cuyp, Poussin, Claude. His "Sun rising through Vapour" (1807), "Crossing the Brook," and "Dido building Carthage" (1815) are among the fruit of this season, which also yielded the great series of monochromes in the *Liber*

Studiorum. In his second period (1820-35) Turner had found himself, and it was then he painted his glorious visions of nature, with matchless accomplishment and perfect restraint. This was the period of "The Bay of Baïæ" (1823), "Dido directing the Equipment of the Fleet" (1828), "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus" (1829), and his drawings for *Rivers of England* and *Harbours of England* (1824). The greatest pictures of Turner's third period (1835-45), when he often aimed at effects beyond the reach of art, are "The Fighting Téméraire" (1839), "The Sun of Venice," "The Burial of Wilkie," and "The Slave Ship" (1840). Turner's painting of light and atmosphere was marvellous in its superb rendering of the subtlest and the sublimest effects of natural phenomena. The depths of aerial perspective, the magic and splendour of the heavens, the mass and majesty of mountains, the beauty and terror of the sea, all these were interpreted in their full meaning for the first time. It is not too much to say that Turner endowed mankind with a new sense of vision; and Ruskin's exposition of his significance made his own and future generations aware of the fact.

Early Victorian Painters

Beside Turner, all other painters of early Victorian days fall into the shade. John Linnell (1792-1882) has been called a Sussex Constable. Francis Danby (1793-1861) painted some impressive effects of light and darkness. John Martin (1789-1854), though a charlatan, made quite a stir with his apocalyptic scenes, "Belshazzar's Feast" (1821), "The Fall of Babylon" (1819), and "The Fall of Nineveh" (1853). More genuine artists were the water-colourists, Thomas Girtin (1775-1802), Sir A. W. Calcott (1779-1844), Samuel Prout (1783-1852), Peter de Wint (1784-1849), Copley Fielding (1787-1855), and David Cox (1783-1859); also the architectural painter David Roberts (1796-1864); the genre-painter William Mulready (1786-1863); that fine portrayer of character, C. R. Leslie (1794-1859); the master of nude figure-painting, William Etty (1787-1847); and the great Richard Parker Bonington (1801-28),

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

cut off in his early prime, but not before he had given lessons to future schools both in England and in France. Edwin Landseer (1802-73) was the first great painter of animals, and he drew them with human traits. Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867) devoted fine talents to painting the sea, which he is well said to have drawn as a figure-painter draws a model, confident in the sufficiency of its beauty.

The outstanding event in the history of English painting after Turner is the Pre-Raphaelite movement. This was an attempt to get back to the truth of nature by rejecting the conventionalism attributed by the Pre-Raphaelites to the influence of

Raphael. William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), Sir John Millais (1829-96), and D. G. Rossetti (1828-82) were the founders of the movement. The school had enormous vogue and incalculable influence. Millais became president of the Royal Academy at a date when his originality was becoming less pronounced; and there is hardly a wall of any important modern gallery in the United Kingdom that is not adorned with specimens of the art of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Ford Madox Brown (1821-93), Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98), and G. F. Watts (1817-1904), three other individualists of this period, will be considered in the next chapter.



OPHELIA

From the Painting by Sir John Everett Millais, P.R.A., in the National Gallery.

CHAPTER XXVII

LITERATURE, DRAMA, PAINTING, AND ARCHITECTURE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH AND BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THOUGH we may chronicle the literary events of the last thirty-five or forty years and trace relationships and influences, we can hardly call the result history. For that the world must wait till

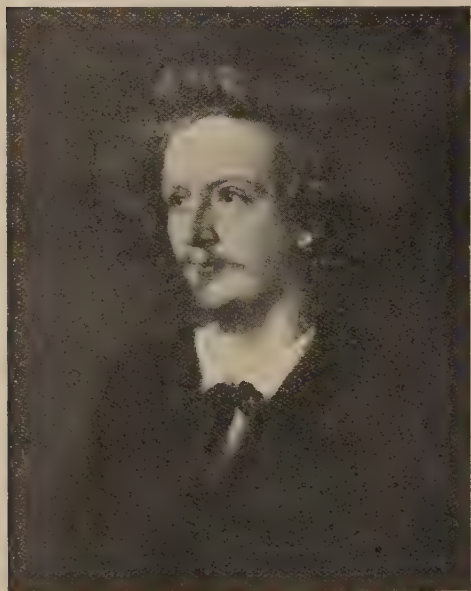


Photo: Fred Hollyer.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

the perspective has grown considerably longer. Nevertheless, to leave the story of English letters without reference to twentieth-century conditions would be to ignore the truth of the continuous development of our literature: the evolution of drama can be traced to the miracle and morality plays, the novel is seen to be derived from mediæval romance, and of our modern poetry there

are few forms of which the antetypes cannot be distinguished in Elizabethan, Chaucerian, and even in Anglo-Saxon or Middle-English poetry, while the sense, the spirit, the emotion are fundamentally the same in all the great eras of verse. The rule that the past cannot be interpreted without a wide knowledge of the present, applies to the history of literature and art no less than to the political or economic history of a nation.

From Tennyson's death until his own, Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) stood unchallenged as the greatest of living poets. He should properly be grouped with Rossetti and Morris among the Pre-Raphaelites, but his long life and sustained activity brought him into close touch with our own day and justify his inclusion here. In 1861 Swinburne published *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamund*, two plays; and in 1865 the finest modern lyrical play after the Greek manner, *Atalanta in Calydon*. In this play the rushing blank verse and the noble choruses, with their variety of metres, revealed the great master of harmonies.

Swinburne never surpassed *Atalanta*, though he wrote another classical play, *Erechtheus*, ten years later. *Atalanta* brought him enthusiastic admiration, but his *Poems and Ballads* (1866) secured a wider popularity. This volume contained the magnificent *Triumph of Time*, *Dolores*, and *The Garden of Proserpine*. It also contained much that challenged the common morality of Christendom, provoking thereby the hostility of the orthodox, with the result that the publisher Moxon withdrew the book, which was afterwards taken over by Messrs. Chatto and Windus. Swinburne answered his critics in *Notes on Poems and Reviews*, and then brought

SWINBURNE AND SOME OTHERS

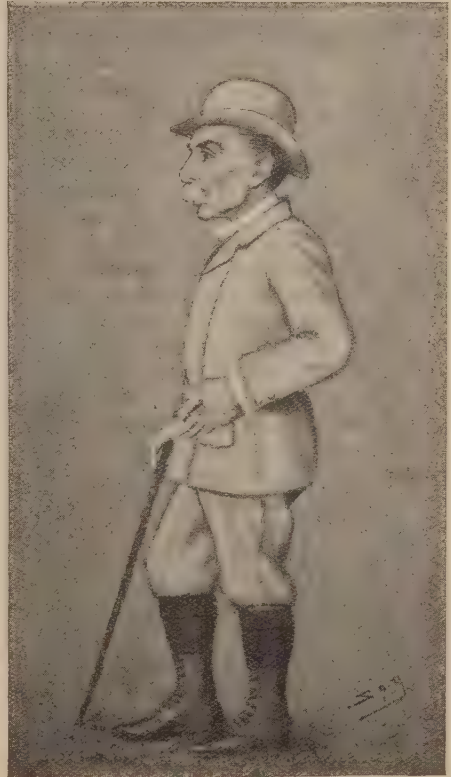
out his *Song of Italy* (1867). In *Songs before Sunrise* (1871) he sang of red revolution and freedom, in many metres, and sang powerfully of a new religion—faith in the secular progress of man through the devotion and sacrifice of men. His early play *Chastelard* (1865) was followed by *Bothwell* (1874) and *Mary Stuart* (1881); but this trilogy had little of the splendour and rhythmical beauty of *Atalanta*. In *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882) and *The Tale of Balen* (1896) he entered the field of Arthurian romance; but he was an impassioned lyricist and not a story-teller. In his later volumes, notably in *Astrophel, and other Poems* (1894), which contains *Loch Torridon*, a piece full of the music of the mountains and the sea, he showed the old mastery of technique. But much of the work of his maturity, though it astounds by its technical dexterity and novel effects of sound and rhythm, is singularly empty of meaning.

Swinburne wrote a large amount of criticism, which consists chiefly of unrestrained eulogy of Elizabethan dramatists and writers like Victor Hugo, whom he passionately admired. He wrote as another poet, recognizing intuitively the greater qualities of his subjects. This peculiar insight of his, together with his immense knowledge of literature, makes his appreciations illuminating and valuable; but he was singularly wanting in balance; there was plenty of praise but little judgment, and the exuberance of both his praise and his prose tends to oppress the reader.

Theodore Watts, afterwards Watts-Dunton (1832–1914), was Swinburne's housemate in Chelsea, and for many years his protector at Putney. He wrote a number of fine sonnets, including a charming sequence, partly in gipsy dialect, *The Coming of Love*, and a fascinating romance, *Aylwin*, in which he put Rossetti, Morris, Symonds, and other members of the Pre-Raphaelite coterie, and a gipsy heroine drawn from life. As a critic he had an unerring eye for what was great and fine, and a gift for expounding the philosophy of literature that no English critic has excelled.

The other poets of the time must be enumerated with more brevity. James Thomson ("B. V.") (1834–82), author of

The City of Dreadful Night, harks back to the funereal poetry of Young and Blair; but his pessimism is deeper and more hopeless than theirs, his imagination more Dantesque, and his lyrical gift more moving. Of a more exquisite order of genius was Francis Thompson (1859–1907), who belonged to the tribe of



ALFRED AUSTIN

From the Drawing by Leslie Ward ("Spy"), in the National Portrait Gallery.

Crashaw. A Roman Catholic, many of his most impassioned poems are devotional, or are at any rate inspired by the ecstasy of religious emotion. The best is *The Hound of Heaven*, a great ode displaying his plastic command of language, an inexhaustible flow of imagery, and an almost orchestral magnificence of sonorous rhythms. Many of his less ambitious pieces are still more pleasing. Thompson was also a critic of rare perception, with skill in minting

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phrases that seemed to express the quintessence of genius. His essay on Shelley is a most luminous study of that ethereal poet.

Two delightful composers of humorous verse were C. S. Calverley (1831-84) and J. K. Stephens (1859-92), with whom Frederick Locker-Lampson (1821-95), writer of much society verse and editor of the best collection of such poetry, *Lyra Elegantiarum*, may be grouped. Alfred Austin (1835-1913), Tennyson's successor as poet laureate, was of more account as the author of several meditative books, half novel, half essay, than as a poet. John Davidson (1857-1909), author of *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893-95), in which he contrasted the grimmer aspects of town life with the glory and freedom of nature, set forth in a series of "Testaments" his rationalistic and revolutionary philosophy of life. He was fiery and rousing as a balladist, but in these inchoate compositions the beauty of the blank verse is ruined by the strange scientific terminology, and the poetry by lapses into sheer prose. The poetical work of W. E. Henley (1849-1903) was much smaller in amount but of a highly distinctive quality. He also was a poet of paganism and revolt, with as much energy and intensity of feeling as Davidson. He handled with daring realism themes hitherto deemed too ugly for poetry, in *London Voluntaries* and *Hospital Rhymes*; and in lyrics and irregular rhythms as lawless as Whitman's voiced the defiant and unconquerable optimism that was rather the offspring of his energetic temperament than of his creed.

Two Classical Poets

Two poets who in different ways may be described as classical are Lord de Tabley (1835-95) and Sir William Watson (b. 1858). De Tabley chose classical subjects in his dramatic fragment *Medea*, in the briefer *Circe* and *Daphne*, and in the dialogue *Pandora*. He had considerable dramatic power, and the richness of his diction, combined with the minute familiarity with nature of one who was a trained observer, gives a great opulence of beauty to these and many other pieces in his *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical*. Sir William Watson is classical in the dignity of his style, the lofty rhetoric, the sculptured phrase, the

restrained and finished beauty of his many essays in classical forms. His *Hymn to the Sea* is one of the most worthy attempts in our language to reproduce the rolling grandeur of Latin elegiacs. *Ver Tenebrosum* and *The Year of Shame* are sonnet-sequences denouncing, with oratorical violence, the Soudanese war and the atrocities sanctioned by Abdul Hamid. His poetry, inspired by the work of many other poets, especially of Wordsworth, is lacking in originality. In this place may be mentioned the work of Sir W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911), who wrote much humorous verse in addition to the witty libretti of the justly popular Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

Dramatists and Playwrights

An earnest attempt was made to develop and modernize the British drama in the latter years of the nineteenth century, and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Sir A. W. Pinero (b. 1855), and Mr. H. A. Jones (b. 1851) were leaders in this movement. Mr. George Bernard Shaw (b. 1856) became its most lively protagonist, of the modern theatre, Messrs. Granville Barker (b. 1877) and John Galsworthy (b. 1867) and Sir J. M. Barrie (b. 1860) coming little short of him in accomplishment, and the Irish school of playwrights exercising a powerful influence.

Wilde's plays were light comedies characterized by an extremely piquant verbal wit that often consisted of epigrammatically saying the precise reverse of what would be expected. *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1893) and *The Importance of being Earnest* (1899) were the best of these, and *The Duchess of Padua* and *Salome* the finest of his more tragic plays. Wilde also wrote a rather repellent novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a number of fantastic tales, the grim *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and *De Profundis*, a piece of self-confession and self-portraiture after his downfall.

By far the most interesting figure among the playwrights is Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is not only a playwright, but a Socialist of the Fabian school and a scathing expounder of the futilities of the existing social scheme. In his *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* the majority are problem plays, dealing with definite phases of society, for the most part

IRISH NATIONALISM IN LITERATURE

destructively, though Mr. Shaw has a constructive scheme in reserve. All are skilful in technique, fertile in surprising situations, full of satire, irony, or unadulterated farce. *Cæsar and Cleopatra* is among the few that reveal any touch of the poetic imagination, which is sternly kept under restraint. It cannot be said that the dream-fantasy in *Man and Superman*, his longest play and most serious expression of a philosophy of life, previous to his *Back to Methuselah*, is very impressive. Mr. Shaw, however, is no realist; rather must his characters be regarded as exponents of their author's mind than as types of real men and women. That he endows them with a vigorous life of their own by sheer intellectual energy is



WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

From the Bronze Bust by Rodin, in the National Portrait Gallery.

nevertheless not to be denied. The brilliant intellect comes out again in his critical or controversial prose—all his prose in truth is controversial. Here we need not look for the graces of prose, but for a realism and directness akin to Swift's, and a dialectic like the rapier's point.

Irish nationalism for the last quarter of a century has flowered in linguistic and literary revivals no less than in political aspirations. One notable result of this has been the rediscovery and transcription into an English richly flavoured with Irish idiom of an enormous mass of legend that existed in a manuscript form or simply in oral tradition. Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirhemne* and her *Gods and Fighting Men* are recensions of



OSCAR WILDE

From a Photograph.



FRANCIS THOMPSON

From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry, Limited.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

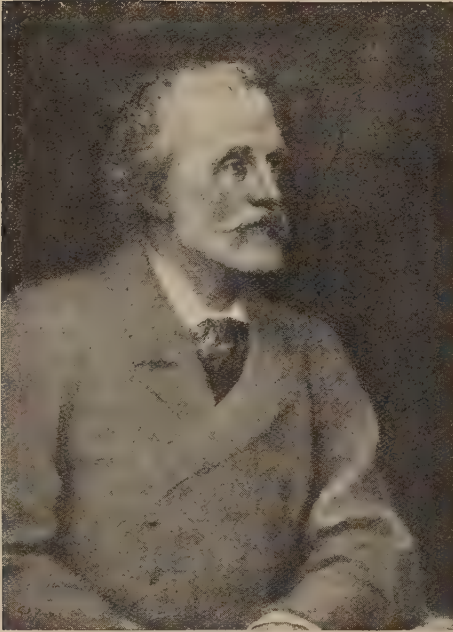


Photo: Fred Hollyer.

GEORGE MEREDITH

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

the hero-cycles of Ireland that remind one of the *Mabinogion* or even of Malory. With tact and charm and without excessive care for scientific literality, the fantastic myths have been clothed in an English dress. At the same time a literal accuracy has been furnished by the translations of Miss Faraday, Miss Eleanor Hull, and other workers at the publication of Irish texts. The Irish movement has had a still more important effect in stimulating an outburst of original creation in poetry, drama, and in miscellaneous prose. William Butler Yeats (*b.* 1866) stands at the head of the poets, and he has also given us plays, stories, and critical essays, besides two collections of folk-tales and fairy-stories. His imagination is of the haunting, elusive type of *Christabel* and *The Ancient Mariner*. He is a lyrist, with a power of awakening strains of dreamy, sensuous music fitted to the witchery of his chosen themes. Another member of the school, George W. Russell (*b.* 1867), better known by his pseudonym "A. E.," is less remote in his style from the English tradition, but not less

deeply inspired by the glamour and mysticism of the Celt.

One of the most striking personalities of the Irish revival was John Millington Synge (1871–1909), who lived among the remote Aran islanders and wrote a vivid and kindly account of their character. He was a master of the descriptive essay, the favourite subject of which was always the primitive Irish peasantry. Among this pathetic people too he got the material for his plays, *Riders to the Sea*, *The Well of the Saints*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *The Tinker's Wedding*, strange productions both in their naïve realism and in their poetry.

The mid-nineteenth century would have been a great period in the history of fiction had it yielded only the novels of Dickens and Thackeray; but it also brought forth the Brontëan novel, the stories of Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot's novels, and many other novels that are almost classics. Yet the immediately succeeding age, if not so great in the mass of its creation, was none the less interesting. George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, the romancers R. L. Stevenson and R. D.



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

From the Painting (unfinished) by Sir W. B. Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

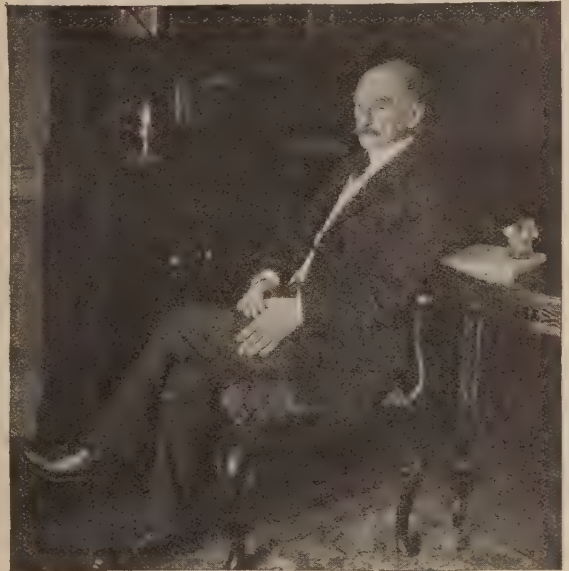
THE WORK OF GEORGE MEREDITH

Blackmore, Mrs. Oliphant and George Gissing, were followed by such writers as Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Sir J. M. Barrie, Mr. Joseph Conrad, William De Morgan, Mr. H. G. Wells, and Mr. Arnold Bennett. Nowhere else can we point to such a notable array in the fertility, the fine technique, and the amazing variety of the creative work.

George Meredith (1828–1909) began to write stories early enough to be reviewed by George Eliot. There are some who would put his poems even higher than his novels, but it is the latter that constitute his great and original contribution to English literature. *The Shaving of Shagpat, an Arabian Entertainment* (1856), was the book reviewed at considerable length by George Eliot. It was followed by *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*—published in the same year as *Adam Bede* (1859)—a novel rich in character, intensely lyrical in the love-passages, and heart-rending in its tragedy. *Evan Harrington* (1861) was lighter in its comedy, and equally rich in its characters. *Sandra Belloni* (1864) and its sequel *Vittoria* (1867) gave the whole career of a woman of genius, a great singer, who fought with her voice for freedom in the Italian insurrection of 1848. *Rhoda Fleming* (1865) was another tragic novel, with an heroic central figure. *Harry Richmond* (1871) is intensely Meredithian—a typical example of his poetic comedy, in which incidents and characters, though wildly romantic, are justified by the psychology. *Beauchamp's Career* (1876) is the story of a political enthusiast whose "rocket-mind" brings him to an untimely end. All these novels were complex in structure, subtle in their psychology, full of poetry in their portraiture of nature as a part of the drama, and rich in the Meredithian comedy, which is akin to Molière's. The most elaborate comedy of all was the next, *The Egoist* (1879). In this famous study Meredith anatomizes at immense length and in microscopic detail

a rich, petted, outwardly admirable young man, one of the cherished ornaments of English society; and shows him to be a compound of meanness, conceit, and selfishness. In the love affairs of this hero the masculine regime and the sultanate treatment of women are profoundly satirized.

The later novels show Meredith yielding incorrigibly to his mannerisms. The plots



THOMAS HARDY

From a Photograph by E. O. Hoppe.

become complicated and cumbrous, the style overloaded with meaning, the whole effect over-subtle and too purely intellectual. But there are flashes of poetry, brilliant comedy, superb heroines, and interesting side-characters, right down to *The Amazing Marriage* (1895) and the posthumous *Celt and Saxon*.

There is some little kinship between Meredith and the essayist and romancer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94); for instance in their intellectual attitude to life, their love of the dramatic, and their artistic handling of natural scenery. But the two men were not on the same plane, and only in the tragic *Master of Ballantrae* (1889) and the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston* did the younger writer approach the heights where his elder

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ruled. *Treasure Island* (1883) and *Kidnapped* (1886) were unsurpassed examples of the romance of adventure. In *Prince Otto* (1885) Stevenson explored the psychological regions where complex characters react on each other in the stress of trial and passion. In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) he gave a weird apologue of the good and evil natures in man, as revealed



RICHARD DODDRIDGE BLACKMORE
From a Photograph.

by a supernatural change of personality. In *The Merry Men* were the finest of his short stories, *Will o' the Mill*, *Thrawn Janet*, and *Markheim*. Stevenson also wrote several remarkable novels in collaboration, notably a gigantic farce, *The Wrong Box* (1892), and the grim pirate story, *The Ebb Tide* (1894). His essays in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881) and *Memories and Portraits*, displayed an earnest moral philosophy and an exquisite style fashioned on a galaxy of the best models. In such books as *Travels with a Donkey* (1879) and *An Inland Voyage* (1878) the charm of Stevenson is but little inferior to that of Sterne in the *Sentimental Journey*.

The second great novelist of the later Victorian epoch is Thomas Hardy, born in 1840. He began as a realist delineating the

dark and unromantic side of rustic life with the zest of the French naturalists—a characteristic that comes out with greatest strength in quite a late novel, *Jude the Obscure* (1896). Hardy is no mere transcriber of facts, however; his novels are works of finished art, in which a pessimistic creed, a fatalism that regards each man's conduct and destiny as determined for him irrevocably by the elements in his being and circumstances of his environment that are beyond his power to change, is embodied in a series of impressive tragedies having the inevitability and the structural beauty of a Greek play. *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) depicted the storms of passion, the squalor, and the crime that are left out of the picture in the average idyll of country life. *The Return of the Native* (1878) and *The Woodlanders* (1887) were tragic novels in which external nature, magnificently painted, seems to be one of the protagonists, and does indeed typify the influence of environment in controlling the evolution of man's character. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) shows an impetuous, domineering nature surrendering to passion and compassing its own ruin. *Wessex Tales* (1888) and *Life's Little Ironies* (1894) are collections of sardonic stories expressing the same dissatisfaction with life and the sense of a malignant power shaping man's destinies awry. Most tragic of all is *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1888), provocatively sub-titled "A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented."

Besides his novels, Hardy is the author of several volumes of poems. These contain the philosophy of the Wessex stories, the sense of universal tragedy, the stoic endurance, the fits of disillusionment and of occasional cynicism, in a condensed form—in sententious sonnets, dramatic monologues, and bitter lyrics. Sometimes, as often in the novels, the rustic humours afford comic relief, and a few pieces, like the ballad of *Valenciennes* and the Chaucerian broad comedy of *The Fire at Tranter Sweätley's* (1875), are a jovial contrast to the prevailing gloom. Hardy is also the author of a remarkable dramatic work, *The Dynasts* (1908), in nineteen acts and a hundred and thirty scenes, where the tragedy of determinism is worked out on a vast scale in a series of episodes of the Napoleonic wars.

THE "KAILYARD SCHOOL"

More unrelieved in gloom and sadness, largely because without the saving grace of humour, is the earnest and conscientious painting of lower middle-class life in the work of another realist, George Gissing (1857–1903). He wrote a long series of novels that are as serious and patient in their investigation of social conditions and the schemes proposed for remedying these as any sociological treatise. *Demos* (1886) is a study of English socialism, *Thyrza* (1887) a pathetic history of a factory-girl, *The Nether World* a powerful delineation of the poverty-stricken multitudes of Clerkenwell, brutalized by the struggle for life, *New Grub Street* (1891) an equally pessimistic study of the literary career. *In the Year of Jubilee* and *The Town Traveller* are London stories not without humour; but *The Whirlpool* is tragic again, and *The Crown of Life*, for all its lofty ideals, gives chiefly the piteous side of human existence. In *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903) Gissing recounted much of his own life, his own aspirations, and meditations on things in general.

Among the later Victorians must be mentioned R. D. Blackmore (1825–1900), author of *Lorna Doone* (1869), a story of Exmoor and the very first outcome of a prolific revival of historical romance. It was followed by several Yorkshire, Hampshire, and Devonshire romances that were almost as good. William Black (1841–98) may also be counted among the romancers, though he sought the romantic atmosphere not in the glamour of the past but in the sea and mountain scenery of the Scottish Highlands and the Western Isles. He usually made great play with the contrasts of primitive Highland character in contact with the sophistication and glitter of fashionable society. Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901) for the most part found history the richest fount of romance, particularly in the novels written in collaboration with James Rice (1844–82).

Mrs. Margaret Oliphant (1828–97), at her best in the Carlingford stories, as Anthony Trollope (1815–82) is in the Barchester series, achieved a small number of strikingly fine novels that stand out as enormously superior to the remainder of a numerous and miscellaneous output. Just as Trollope found material of first-class quality among the digni-

ties of a cathedral city and their women-folk, Mrs. Oliphant found hers in a provincial town among clerical and nonconformist circles. Both made excellent use of their discovery, and enriched English fiction with a small gallery of memorable characters.

The novel of character was only one of the mediums in which George Macdonald (1824–1905) found expression. His fairy stories



JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

From the Chalk Drawing by C. Orsi, in the National Portrait Gallery.

and tales of second sight were still more charming and original, and his poems are very readable. But it was his excellent portraiture of humble Aberdeenshire folk that was the beginning of the modern "Kailyard School," as it was somewhat contemptuously called. As a matter of fact, the best short stories of "Ian Maclaren" (1850–1907) and S. R. Crockett (1860–1914) and the Thrums stories of Sir J. M. Barrie are as good as the best of Galt's and not immeasurably below the lowland scenes and characters of Scott's novels.

Sir J. M. Barrie has, both in novel and play, dealt with problems of more complexity and subtlety than the simple pathos of his early idylls of Thrums. In his handling of peculiarities of temperament, the nice shades and

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the fine feelings, he comes into competition with Meredith. The comedy of sentimentalism in *Tommy and Grizel* (1896) ranks with the finest of its kind since Sterne.

The early stories of Henry James (1843-1916), American born, but naturalized as a British subject in his old age, were highly finished, minutely detailed studies of American

more and more labyrinthine and obscure. Masterpieces of fiction, they are not for the reader who is unwilling to put forth a serious mental effort.

William De Morgan (1839-1917), who waited till he was a sexagenarian to write novels, may be ranked as a disciple of Dickens. His *Joseph Vance* (1906), *Alice-for-Short* (1907), and *Somehow Good* (1908), with one or two later novels of a similar strain and a similarly enormous length, have each contained a bevy of ingratiating characters.

In the forefront of contemporary British authors stands Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who was born in Bombay (1865). A realist not so much on account of his subjects, which are in truth often ultra-romantic, as in his method, which is the triumph of actuality, Mr. Kipling's stories of Indians and Anglo-Indians, of the British soldier in India, and even of the animals in the jungle, have made these figures widely familiar. He is perhaps our greatest teller of short stories; the perfect construction and the fine economy of detail, his infallible eye for the significant and telling—his power of handling realities imaginatively and of making imagination real, being proof against the most severe æsthetic analysis. Mr. Rudyard Kipling's earliest stories of Anglo-Indian society, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887), and of those inimitable private soldiers, Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd, *Soldiers Three* (1888), were followed by the *Jungle Books* (1894-5), and then by collections of miscellaneous stories, such as those in *The Day's Work* (1898), *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904), and *Actions and Reactions* (1909), together with a tale of the Newfoundland Banks, *Captains Courageous* (1897), a novel, *Kim* (1901), delineating Indian native life with unexampled knowledge, and a number of imaginative story-books for children. Whatsoever the subject, the American financier, the African dealer, the Indian lama, the polo-pony, even the ship or the locomotive, these characters live and act and speak in Mr. Kipling's pages with triumphant actuality.

It is the same in Mr. Kipling's poems, which are written largely in the same non-descript language, and announce a similar message of life and force. One thing that is

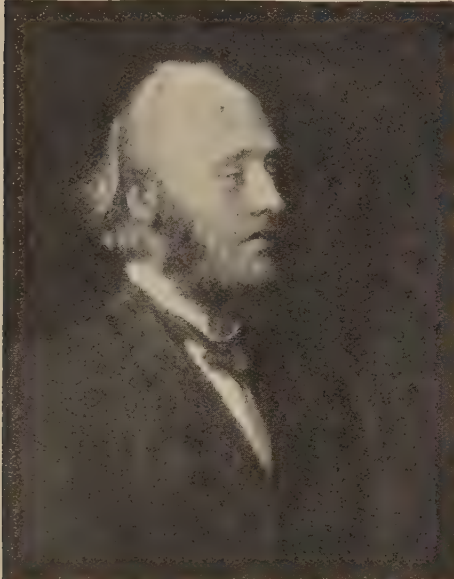


Photo: Fred Hollyer.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

or continental life and character, making little appeal to the feelings but rich in intellectual interest. The middle section of his enormous procession of novels consists very largely of short psychological stories, a natural development of his earlier work. Many are masterpieces, easily standing comparison with the artistic triumphs of Gautier, Maupassant, or Bourget. In later years Henry James went much farther in the pursuit of the elusive psychic trait or the still more elusive phrase that described it to the ordinary mind. Such novels as *The Awkward Age* (1899), *The Sacred Fount* (1901), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), *The Golden Bowl* (1905), in their analysis of social relations and the subtleties of mental atmosphere, have become

NOTABLE ESSAYISTS

overlooked, however, by admirers of Mr. Kipling's poems, is that they evince a metrical art comparable in its way to Swinburne's, disguised though it is by the harshness of the slang and the jingle of pothouse choruses.

Let us summarize the rest of the novelists, not, of course, in depreciation but altogether the reverse.

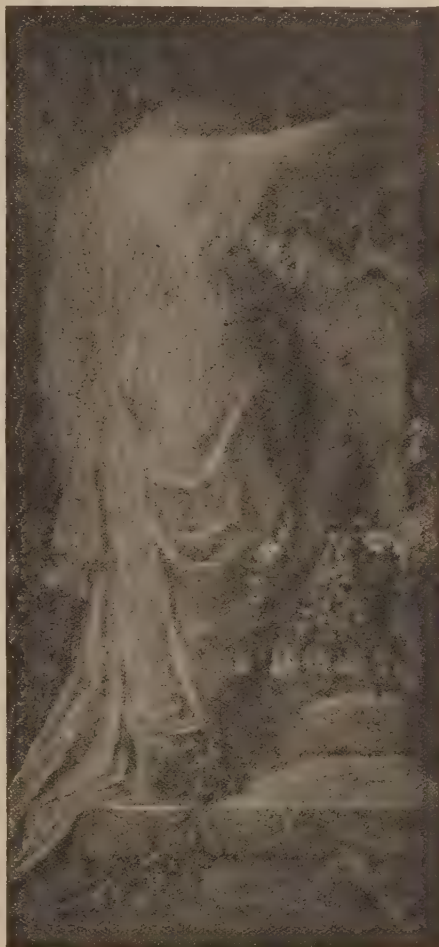
Mr. Arnold Bennett (b. 1867) belongs to the school of Flaubert, the Goncourts, and Maupassant; he is decidedly the greatest "naturalist" England has evolved after French models. Mr. H. G. Wells (b. 1866) is a clever scientist and sociologist who has the knack of expounding questions of the day in the form of popular fiction. He has also written *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), and other stories that reveal the power of drawing character faithfully and humorously. Several short stories by Mr. Wells on fantastic subjects, notably *The Invisible Man* (1897), are of a distinctly high order.

Lesser as a novelist, Mr. John Galsworthy (b. 1867) is even more than Mr. Wells a sociologist as a creator of character or relater of tales. Mr. George Moore (b. 1853) is a thoroughgoing exponent of the Goncourt and Zola creed of minute and unshrinking naturalism. Born in Poland, and for years an officer in the British mercantile marine, Mr. Joseph Conrad (b. 1857) has achieved a mastery of English. In his novels a psychological vision hardly less acute than that of Henry James is applied to the minds of men engaged in affairs, on the ocean, in the depths of Africa, or among the savages of Malaya.

Some notable essayists were among the members or disciples of the Pre-Raphaelite school. John Addington Symonds (1840-93) was an eloquent expounder of æsthetic principles in the history of literature and the plastic arts. Still more distinguished was Walter Pater (1839-94), whose delicate, refined, subtly-cadenced style conveyed expressively the sense and the atmosphere of artist, thinker, or writer, in his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), *Imaginary Portraits* (1887), and *Appreciations* (1889). Richard Jefferies (1848-87), a born naturalist, with keen powers of observation and a sincere,

direct style that brought before the reader's eye the whole pageant of nature as the writer saw it, is to be read for his essays and stories describing the life of the English countryside.

A singular figure, impossible to classify,



LOVE AND DEATH

From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the Tate Gallery.

was Samuel Butler (1835-1902), the author of *Erewhon* (1872), a Gulliverian satire on modern civilization. A sequel, *Erewhon Revisited*, followed in 1901, and in 1905 *The Way of All Flesh*, a novel embodying his evolutionary views of life and morals. He had then written a number of works which

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

contested Darwin's theories, had attempted to prove that the *Odyssey* was written by a woman, had produced some highly original essays and travel-books, had painted pictures, and written music. Butler's genius



KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR MAID

From the Painting by Sir E. Burne-Jones, Bart., in the Tate Gallery.

was too unconcentrated for greatness ; and partly by character, partly by circumstances, he became a crank. That he had an original endowment of genius there can be no question, and Mr. Bernard Shaw has taken the Butlerian philosophy and given it precision and epigrammatic force in play after play,

and in numerous essays, and prefaces, and maxims.

The historians John Richard Green (1837-83), W. E. H. Lecky (1838-1903), Bishop William Stubbs (1825-1901), Lord Acton (1834-1902), S. R. Gardiner (1829-1902), F. W. Maitland (1850-1906), and Lord Morley (1838-1923) were great figures in the Victorian age. Lord Morley, better known as John Morley, was more than an historian ; he was an eminent thinker of the rationalist school, a weighty critic, and a writer of no mean literary rank. Much the same might be said of Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), a peculiarly hard-headed critic, and first editor of that great British monument, the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Another critic and publicist of much individuality, with a gift for surprising the reader into new views, was Walter Bagehot (1826-77), author of *Physics and Politics* (1873) and other political and economic books. Andrew Lang (1844-1912) was a critic with an urbane style. Mr. George Saintsbury (b. 1845) and Mr. Edmund Gosse (b. 1849), differing in style, divergent in their literary theories, tastes, and methods of expounding them, are alike only in their learning. A worthier successor of Coleridge and Arnold, however, is Dr. A. C. Bradley, late professor of poetry at Oxford, author of *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) and *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909).

In later Victorian painting the names of Burne-Jones and G. F. Watts figure largely. That Burne-Jones was a magnificent colourist is shown in his designs for stained glass no less than in his pictures. Religious and legendary subjects attracted him, and he peopled his canvases with creatures of ideal beauty.

The Tate Gallery contains the best of G. F. Watts's pictures. A stronger genius than Burne-Jones, Watts was as great an idealist, but with a firm grounding of realism that made him far more powerful and universal in his appeal. Watts's creative imagination expressed itself by preference in the form of symbolism. His symbolical compositions are beautiful in drawing and design, superb in colouring, and almost beyond comparison among sym-



ST. GEORGE'S HALL, LIVERPOOL

Photo: Philip G. Hunt & Co.

An example of Neo-classicism, designed by Harvey Lonsdale Elmes.



ROYAL PALACE OF JUSTICE, LONDON

Photo: Valentine & Sons.

Designed by George Street.

Two notable architectural features of the nineteenth century.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

bolists in the force and certainty with which they convey their meaning, not by allegorical details, but by the powerful expression of feeling. "Love and Life," "Hope," "Love and Death," "Eve Tempted" and "Eve Repentant," are familiar in the shape of prints even to those who have not seen the originals in our national exhibition. Not less



OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE

From the Painting by J. McNeill Whistler, in the Tate Gallery.

powerful, though they shed around them an atmosphere, not of tragic pity and beauty but of dread and repulsion, are his "Mammon" and "The Minotaur." His portraits also are famous works, for he painted genius so that it revealed itself in every line of the picture.

Lord Leighton (1830-96), who preceded Millais as president of the Royal Academy, was, like Millais's successor, Sir E. J. Poynter (1836-1919), classical in his devotion to beauty, and in the sculptural element of noble statuesque form that is so apparent in his pictures.

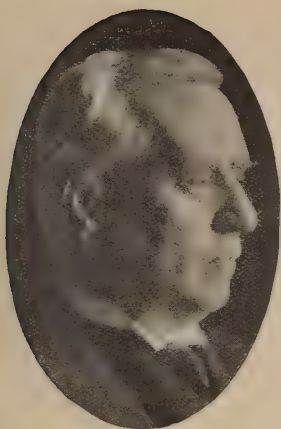
The prince of colourists among these

moderns was an artist of American birth, James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), who stood aloof from the academic and the conventional crowd. His nocturnes and his portraits are consummate harmonies of colour and tone and enthralling revelations of the beauty caught by a supreme impressionist.

One issue of the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, especially of that of Morris, was the immense impetus given to decorative art. In numerous branches of industry the effect has been seen in new schools of design, in a far-reaching movement for sincerity, and a rebellion against the tawdry and the machine-made products of mid-Victorian commercialism.

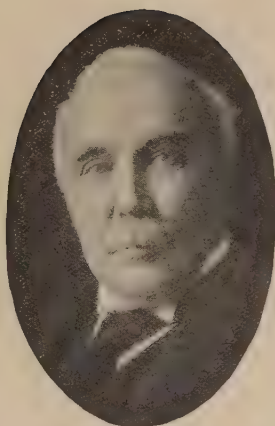
The history of architectural development in modern days carries us back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a Gothic revival was in full swing, a result of the mediæval craze begotten of the romantic movement, but undiscerning in its origin and abortive in its development. It was succeeded by an outburst of neo-classicism, which has left some monuments that are abject failures and a warning to future architects, and a few that are quite the reverse, as for example St. George's Hall at Liverpool. The researches of Thomas Rickman (1776-1841) into the actual history of Gothic art, the enthusiastic work of a really great architect, A. W. N. Pugin (1812-52), and the scholarly and accurate reproduction by Sir Gilbert Scott (1811-78) of the beautiful structural design and exquisite detail of the

Early English and Early Decorated styles, taught people to understand Gothic. Later architects such as George Street (1824-81) built churches and public edifices combining much of the beauty and purity of our finest period of architecture with originality in the treatment of new problems, and even with some independent development, particularly in the disposal of structural masses. At the same time, it must be confessed that the Renaissance style continues to rule as the most suitable and natural style for the needs of our greater buildings at the present day.



HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH,
PRIME MINISTER (1908-16)

*From a Photograph by Smedley
Aston.*



SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-
BANNERMAN,
PRIME MINISTER (1905)

*From a Photograph by Reginald
Haines.*



EARL OF ROSEBERY,
PRIME MINISTER (1894)

*From a Photograph by
Gerrard.*

APPENDIX

PRIME MINISTERS, ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY, AND ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOPS OF WESTMINSTER, FROM 1815 TO 1914

PRIME MINISTERS

Earl of Liverpool (Tory), 1812-27.
(Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary, 1812-22).
George Canning (Tory), April-August, 1827.
Viscount Goderich * (Tory), 1827.
Duke of Wellington (Tory), 1828.
Earl Grey (Whig), 1830.
Viscount Melbourne (Whig), 1834.
Sir Robert Peel (Conservative), November, 1834-April, 1835.
Viscount Melbourne, 1835.
Sir Robert Peel, 1841.
Lord John Russell † (Liberal), 1846.
Earl of Derby (Conservative), February-December, 1852.
Earl of Aberdeen (Coalition), 1852.
Viscount Palmerston (Liberal), 1855.
Earl of Derby, 1858.

* Frederick John Robinson, created Earl of Ripon, 1833.

† Created Earl Russell, 1861.

Viscount Palmerston, 1859.
Earl Russell, 1865.
Earl of Derby, 1866.
Benjamin Disraeli ‡ (Conservative), February-December, 1868.
W. E. Gladstone (Liberal), 1868.
Benjamin Disraeli, 1874.
W. E. Gladstone, 1880.
Marquess of Salisbury (Conservative), June, 1885-January, 1886.
W. E. Gladstone, January-July, 1886.
Marquess of Salisbury, 1886.
W. E. Gladstone, 1892.
Earl of Rosebery (Liberal), 1894.
Marquess of Salisbury, 1895.
A. J. Balfour § (Conservative), 1902.
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Liberal), 1905.
H. H. Asquith (Liberal), 1908-16.

‡ Created Earl of Beaconsfield, 1876.

§ Created Earl Balfour, 1922.

APPENDIX



E. W. BENSON,
ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY (1882)

From a Photograph.



FREDERICK TEMPLE,
ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY (1896)

*From a Photograph by J. Russell
& Sons.*



RANDALL T. DAVIDSON,
ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY (1903)

*From a Photograph by Elliott and
Fry, Limited.*

ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY

C. Manners-Sutton (translated from Norwich), 1805.

W. Howley (translated from London), 1828.

J. B. Sumner (translated from Chester), 1848.

C. T. Longley (translated from York), 1862.

A. C. Tait (translated from London), 1869.

E. W. Benson (translated from Truro), 1882.

F. Temple (translated from London), 1896.

R. T. Davidson (translated from Winchester), 1903.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOPS OF WESTMINSTER

Cardinal N. P. S. Wiseman, 1850.

Cardinal H. E. Manning, 1865.

Cardinal H. Vaughan, 1892.

Cardinal F. Bourne, 1903.



CARDINAL VAUGHAN,
ARCHBISHOP OF
WESTMINSTER (1892)

From a Photograph by Barraud.



CARDINAL BOURNE,
ARCHBISHOP OF
WESTMINSTER (1903)

From a Photograph by G. C. Beresford.

